THE

ARMENIAN;

OR,

THE GHOST SEER.

A HISTORY FOUNDED ON FACT.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

F. SCHILLER,

AUTHOR OF THE ROBBERS, DON CARLOS, &c.

BY

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Work now presented to the Public originally appeared in a German periodical publication entitled, THALIA, *under the name of* The Ghost Seer, a True History, found among the Papers of Count O**; *and was continued from time to time. It has been supposed, and it is not improbable, that it was intended to expose the impostures of the sect of the* Illuminati, *which was then beginning to extend itself in Germany.*

Germany. A translation of the first volume was published about five years ago, with a very imperfect and unsatisfactory account of the conclusion of the History. It was presumed, that a faithful translation of the whole Work would be highly acceptable to those who have read that volume, and to all the admirers of the genius of Schiller.

THE GHOST SEER.

I SHALL relate an event, which to many will appear incredible, but of the greateſt part of which I myſelf was an eye witneſs. The few, who are acquainted with a certain political occurrence, will (if theſe leaves ſhould find them alive) have a perfect key to the publication; but without this Key it will be looked upon as an addition to the hiſtory of deceit and artifice ſo often impoſed upon mankind. The boldneſs of the undertaking, which malice was able to conjecture and to

ſue, muſt excite aſtoniſhment, and alſo the methods which they were able to invent, to ſecure themſelves in their projects. Genuine, bold truth, will conduct my pen; for when theſe leaves go into the world, I ſhall probably be no more, and ſhall never experience the credit with which they are received.

It was on my return to Courland, in the year 17—, about the time of the Carnival, that I paid a viſit to the Prince of W.... in Venice. We had known each other in the P.... military ſervice, and renewed here an acquaintance which peace had interrupted. As I wiſhed to ſee the remarkable city of Venice, the Prince eaſily perſuaded me to bear him company, and to delay my departure from hence until his remittances, which were expected every day, arrived. We agreed to live together as long as our ſtay at

Venice

Venice ſhould laſt, and the Prince was ſo kind as to offer to ſhare his habitation with me at the Moor Hotel. He lived in diſguiſe, becauſe he wiſhed to enjoy himſelf, and his little income did not permit him to maintain the dignity of his rank. Two cavaliers, upon whoſe ſecreſy he could entirely rely, compoſed (beſides ſome truſty ſervants) his whole houſehold. He ſhunned expences more from temperance than œconomy. He fled from diverſions of all kinds; and at the age of thirty-five years, it may be ſaid, that he had reſiſted all the charms of that voluptuous city. The fair ſex was not regarded by him: gravity, and an almoſt profound melancholy, overſhadowed his mind. His paſſions were ſtill, but obſtinate to exceſs; his choice ſlow and fearful; his attachment warm and laſting. Locked up in his own viſionary ideas, he often was a ſtranger to the world about him; and, con-

ſcious of his own deficiency in the knowledge of mankind, he very ſeldom obſerved that line of conduct which influences thoſe who are wary and ſuſpicious. Nobody was ever born to be governed more than he, without being the dupe of artifice and cunning: at the ſame time he was unterrified and deciſive. As ſoon as he was once convinced, he poſſeſſed equal courage to combat an acknowledged prejudice, and to die for a new one. As the third prince of his houſe, he could not have any views for the ſovereignty; his ambition, therefore, on that point, was never awakened: his paſſion had taken quite another direction. Conſcious of his own averſion to being governed by the opinion of others, he never forced his own upon any perſon as a law. The peaceable paths of ſolitude, and a private life, were the ſummit of his wiſhes. He read much, but without ſelection.

ſelection. A narrow education, together with being initiated into the military ſervice early in life, ſerved to check all application to the ſtudy of literature—all the knowledge which he afterwards acquired added but little to his ideas. He was a Proteſtant, as all his family had been, by birth, not by enquiry, which he never attempted, though he was, in a certain epoch of his life, an enthuſiaſt—he never, to my knowledge, became a free-maſon.

One evening, we, as uſual, took a walk by ourſelves, very well maſked, upon St. Mark's Place. As it grew late, and the people were diſperſing, the Prince obſerved that a maſk followed us every where. The maſk was an Arminian, and walked alone. We doubled our ſteps, and ſought by ſtriking into different turns of our road to loſe him, but in vain, for he always remained cloſe behind us.

"You have not had, I hope, any intrigue here?" ſaid the Prince at laſt to me. "The huſbands at Venice are very dangerous."

"I know not one lady," I replied.

"Let us ſit down here, and ſpeak German," he continued. "I imagine they miſtake us for ſome other perſons."

We ſat down upon a ſtone bench, and expected that the maſk would paſs by. He came ſtraight towards us, and took his ſeat very cloſe by the ſide of the Prince; who drew out his watch, and ſaid rather loud in French, riſing at the ſame time from his ſeat:

"Nine—come! we forget that they wait for us at the *Louvre*."

This

This was only a pretence to deceive the maſk as to our rout.

"Nine!" repeated the maſk in the ſame language, very expreſſively and ſlowly. "Wiſh yourſelf joy, Prince, (whilſt he called him by his right name), *at nine o'clock he died.*"

With this he roſe, and went away: we looked at one another very much amazed.

"Who is dead?" ſaid the Prince, after a long ſilence.

"Let us follow him," ſaid I, "and requeſt an explanation."

We hurried through all the bye ways of St. Mark, but the maſk was not to be found. Chagrined at our bad ſucceſs, we proceeded to our hotel. The

Prince ſpoke not a word in our way home, but walked apart from me, apparently in deep reflection, and greatly agitated, as he afterwards confeſſed to me. When we got home, aſſuming an air of gaiety—

"It is indeed laughable," ſaid he, "that a madman ſhould thus be able to diſturb the tranquillity of a perſon's mind by a couple of words."

We wiſhed each other a good night, and as ſoon as I was in my own room, I noted in my pocket-book the day and the hour when this extraordinary event happened—it was upon a Thurſday. The following evening the Prince ſaid to me:

"Let us take a walk again to St. Mark's Place, and try to diſcover this myſterious Arminian. I am very anxious to unravel this adventure."

I agreed

I agreed to the propoſal, and we remained till eleven o'clock wandering about the place: the Arminian was no where to be ſeen. We repeated our viſits the four following evenings, and each time with the ſame bad ſucceſs. The ſixth evening, when we left our hotel, I had the foreſight (whether by deſign or not I cannot ſay) to tell the ſervants where we might be found, if there ſhould be any enquiry after us. The Prince obſerved this, and praiſed my attention with a ſmiling countenance. There was a great crowd upon St. Mark's Place when we arrived there; and we ſcarcely had gone thirty ſteps, when I obſerved the Arminian, who puſhed himſelf through the crowd in great haſte, and ſeemed to be in the act of ſearching for ſomebody. We were juſt upon the point of reaching him, when the Baron F. . . one of the Prince's companions, came breath-

leſs towards us, and delivered a letter to the Prince.

"It is ſealed black," ſaid he, "and we thought that it might contain intelligence of great conſequence."

It ſtruck me like a thunderbolt. The Prince went to a lamp, and began to read the contents.

"My couſin is dead," he cried.

"When?" ſaid I, interrupting him haſtily.

He once more read the letter.

"Laſt Thurſday, at nine o'clock in the evening."

We ſcarcely had time to recover ourſelves from our ſurprize, when the Arminian appeared.

"You

"You are known here, gracious Sire," ſaid he to the Prince, "Haſten to the Moor: you'll find there ambaſſadors from the Senate, and do not heſitate to accept the honour which they will offer you. The Baron F... forgot to tell you that your remittances are arrived."

He left us precipitately, and mingled with the crowd. We haſtened to our hotel, and found every thing as the Arminian had announced to us. Three noblemen of the Republic were arrived ready to receive the Prince, and to conduct him with ſplendor to the aſſembly, where the firſt nobility of the city expected him. He had juſt time enough to let me underſtand, by a ſlight hint, that he wiſhed me to ſet up for him. About eleven o'clock at night he returned. He came into the room ſerious and thoughtful; and, after having diſ

miſſed the ſervants, he ſeized me by the hand.

"Count," he ſaid, with the words of Hamlet, "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philoſophy."

"Gracious Sir," I replied, "you ſeem to forget that you are enriched with the proſpect of a ſovereignty *."

"Do not remind me of that," ſaid the Prince, "I have ſomething of greater importance to me than a crown

* The deceased was the hereditary Prince, the only son of the reigning .... who was in years, very sickly, and without the least prospect of having an heir to his dominions. An uncle of our Prince, almost in the same situation, now alone stood between him and the throne. I am obliged to mention this circumstance, as the subject will be treated of in the Work.

GERMAN EDITOR.

that

that now claims my attention, if that Arminian has not been at gueſs work."

"How is that poſſible, Prince?" I replied.

"Then will I reſign all my princely hope for the habit of a monk."

The following evening we went together earlier to the market-place. A heavy ſhower of rain obliged us to take ſhelter in a coffee-houſe, where we obſerved a number of perſons at a gaming table. The Prince placed himſelf behind the chair of a Spaniard to ſee the game played, whilſt I went into an adjoining room to read the papers. A little time afterwards I heard a noiſe. Before the arrival of the Prince, the Spaniard univerſally loſt, but ſince he entered, the latter won upon every card. The whole game was totally changed, and the bank was in danger of

of being challenged by the pointer, whom this lucky reverſe of fortune had made bolder. The Venetian, who kept it, ſaid to the Prince in a ſurly tone—

"You have changed the luck, and ſhall quit the table."

The Prince looked at him coolly, without giving him an anſwer, and kept his place, but the Venetian repeated his command in French. The latter thought that the Prince did not underſtand either language; and, addreſſing himſelf to the company with a ſneering grin—

"Tell me, Gentlemen," ſaid he, "how I ſhall make myſelf underſtood by this fool?"

Hereupon he ſtood up, and would have ſtruck the Prince; but the Prince's patience forſaking him, he did not wait for the attack, but ſeized the Venetian by

by the throat, and daſhed him with violence on the ground. This circumſtance threw the whole houſe into confuſion. Upon hearing the uproar, I ran into the room, and unguardedly called him by his name."

"Take care, Prince," ſaid I, incautiouſly, "we are in Venice!"

The name of the Prince excited an univerſal ſilence, and ſoon after a confuſed murmur ran through the aſſembly, which appeared to me to have a dangerous tendency. The Italians preſent crowded round each other, and walked aſide. They ſoon quitted the room, one after the other, and we found ourſelves left only with the Spaniard and ſeveral Frenchmen.

"You are loſt, gracious Sir," ſaid a Frenchman, "if you do not leave the city directly. The Venetian, whom you

you have handled ſo roughly, is rich enough to hire a bravo—it will only coſt him fifty ſequins to be revenged by your death."

The Spaniard, in concert with the Frenchmen, offered to conduct the Prince with ſafety to his houſe. We were ſtanding thus conſulting what was beſt to be done, when the door of the room was ſuddenly opened, and ſeveral officers of the *State Inquiſition* entered. They produced an order from the government, in which we were both commanded to follow them immediately. They conducted us under a ſtrong eſcort to a canal, where a boat waited for us. We were ordered to embark; but before we quitted it, our eyes were blindfolded; and, upon our landing, we found that they led us up a ſtone ſtair-caſe, and then through a long winding paſſage over arches, as we could diſcover by the repeated echoes

that

that ſounded under our feet. We ſoon arrived at another ſtair-caſe, which in twenty-ſix ſteps brought us to the bottom. We then heard a door creek upon its hinges; and when they took the bandage from our eyes, we found ourſelves in a ſpacious hall, encircled by an aſſembly of venerable old men. All appeared in ſable robes, and the hall hung with black cloth, was dimly lighted by a few ſcattered tapers. A deadly ſilence prevailed through the aſſembly, which cauſed in us an awful ſenſation too powerful to be deſcribed. One of the old men, who appeared to be the principal ſtate inquiſitor, came near to the Prince, and ſpoke to him with a ſolemn countenance, whilſt another ſet before him the Venetian.

"Do you acknowledge this man to be the ſame that you uſed ſo roughly in the coffee-houſe?"

"Yes!"

"Yes!" anſwered the Prince.

Then turning to the priſoner—

"Is that the perſon you would have aſſaſſinated this evening?"

The priſoner anſwered, "Yes."

Immediately the judges opened the circle, and we ſaw, with the utmoſt horror, the head of the Venetian ſeparated from his ſhoulders.

"Are you ſatisfied with this ſacrifice?" ſaid the State Inquiſitor.

The Prince fainted in the arms of his conductors.

"Go," he continued, with a terrible voice, as he turned towards me, "and think in future more favourably of the adminiſtration of juſtice in Venice."

We

We could not learn who our unknown friend was, who had thus delivered us, by the arm of juſtice, from the diabolical plans of the aſſaſſin.

We reached our habitation terrified in the extreme. It was midnight. The chamberlain Z... waited for us upon the ſtairs with great impatience.

" How lucky it was," ſaid he to the Prince, as he lighted us up ſtairs, " that you ſent the meſſenger as you did; the intelligence from the Baron, which was brought to this houſe from the market-place, excited in us a dreadful anxiety for your ſafety."

" I ſent a meſſage!" ſaid the Prince. " When? I know nothing of it."

" This evening, after eight o'clock, a perſon arrived, and ſaid, we muſt not be alarmed if you ſhould not return until late at night."

Here

Here the Prince ſaid to me—

"You, perhaps, without my knowledge, have taken this precaution."

"I know nothing of it."

"It muſt certainly be ſo, your Highneſs," ſaid the chamberlain, "for here is your watch, which he left with me as a proof that he had been with you."

The Prince felt his pocket immediately: the watch was actually gone; and, looking upon that which the chamberlain held in his hand, he acknowledged it to be his own.

"Who brought it?" ſaid he, with eagerneſs.

"An unknown maſk in an Arminian habit, who immediately went away."

We

We ſtood and looked at each other in ſilent horror.

"What think you of this?" ſaid the Prince at laſt, after a long pauſe, "It is now certain that I have in Venice a ſecret inſpector."

The frightful tranſactions of this night threw the Prince into a fever, which confined him to his room for eight days. During this time our hotel was crowded with citizens and ſtrangers, who had lately learnt the rank of the Prince. They ſtrove to vie with each other in ſhewing civility to the Prince, and we ſaw with pleaſure every night how faſt ſuſpicion was wearing away. Love letters and billets came from all quarters. Every perſon endeavoured to make himſelf uſeful. The whole proceedings of the State Inquiſition were no longer thought of. In the mean time, the Court of ... did not wiſh to haſten

haſten the departure of the Prince, and therefore gave inſtructions to a rich banker in Venice to furniſh him with large ſums of money. Thus he was put into a condition, contrary to his inclination, of remaining longer in Italy; and, agreeable to his wiſhes, I conſented not to haſten my departure. As ſoon as he was ſo far recovered as to be able to leave his chamber, the phyſician ordered him to make an excurſion upon the Brenta for the benefit of the air. The weather was fine, and we ſoon made an agreeable party. Juſt as we were about to ſtep into the gondola, the Prince miſſed a key to a little box which contained ſome valuable papers. We returned immediately to look for it. He remembered perfectly to have locked the box the day before, and ſince that time he had not quitted the room. But all our efforts to diſcover it were fruitleſs: we therefore abandoned the ſearch; and the

Prince,

Prince, whoſe ſoul was above ſuſpicion, gave it over as loſt, but requeſted me not to take any notice of it. The voyage was delightfully enchanting; the landſcape ſeemed to increaſe in beauty and variety at every turn of the river; added to this, a clear ſky, which in the middle of February formed a May-day. The charming gardens that ſurrounded the elegant country houſes which every where adorned the ſides of the Brenta, together with the majeſtic Venice crowned with an hundred towers, as if riſing from the water, offered us one of the moſt delightful proſpects in the world. We loſt ourſelves entirely in the beautiful magic of the ſcenery around us. Our ſpirits were elated, and even the Prince aſſumed an air of gaiety, and joined with us in our frolickſome pleaſantry. Sweet muſic occupied our attention, when we got to the ſhore about two Italian miles from the town. It proceeded from a ſmall village

lage where they were holding a fair. Here every art was practiſed by the company. A troop of young maidens and children, dreſſed in a theatrical manner, welcomed us with a pantomimic dance. The invention was new: nimbleneſs and grace animated every motion. Before the dance was ended, one of them, who ſeemed to be the principal perſon, and who acted the part of the queen, ſuddenly ſtopped, as if reſtrained by an inviſible power. She ſtood ſtill, all followed her example, and the muſic ceaſed. An univerſal ſilence prevailed in the whole aſſembly, whilſt ſhe remained with her eyes fixed upon the ground as in a profound trance: then ſhe became as if inſpired, looked wild, and cried in a tranſport of joy—

"A king is amongſt us!"

She

She roſe, took her crown from her head, and placed it at the feet of the Prince. All who were preſent directed their eyes towards the Prince, who was a long time uncertain what could be the meaning of this juggle, ſo well had ſhe acted the monkey tricks of this farce in earneſt. At length an univerſal clapping of hands interrupted this ſilence. I looked at the Prince, and perceived that he was not a little concerned and hurt to be examined by the enquiring eyes of the company. He diſtributed money to the children, and haſtened from the crowd. We had not gone far, when a venerable monk came from the crowd, and placed himſelf in the path we were purſuing.

"Sir," ſaid the Monk, "beſtow ſome of your money upon Madona; you will need her prayers."

He ſpoke this in a tone which ſtartled us—the crowd, however, ſoon ſeparated him from us. Our ſuit was in the meantime increaſed. An Engliſh Lord, whom the Prince had ſeen before at Nizza, ſeveral merchants from Leghorn, a German prelate, a French abbé, with ſeveral ladies, and a Ruſſian officer, attached themſelves to our party. The phyſiognomy of this laſt, had ſomething ſo remarkable about it, that it attracted our attention. Never in my life did I ſee ſo many traits, and ſo little character; ſo much inviting benevolence, and ſuch forbidding coldneſs painted together in one man's countenance. Every paſſion ſeemed to have formerly dwelt there, and to have abandoned it. Nothing remained but the ſtill piercing look of a perfect man of the world—every eye was fixed upon him wherever he went. This ſtranger followed at a diſtance, and

ſeemed

ſeemed indifferent to whatever was going on. We arrived at the booth where a lottery was kept: the ladies bought tickets—we followed their example, and the Prince alſo purchaſed a ſhare. He won a ſnuff box; and, when he opened it, I perceived him turn pale, and ſtart back with the utmoſt ſurprize—the little key he had loſt was in it.

"What is this?" ſaid he to me when we were alone, with a fixed countenance, "an unknown power purſues me, an all-powerful being hovers over me; an inviſible agency, which I cannot flee from, watches over all my actions. I muſt ſeek the Arminian, and obtain an explanation from him."

The ſun was ſetting as we arrived at the pleaſure houſe where the ſupper was ſerved up. The name of the

Prince had increaſed our party to the number of ſixteen perſons. Beſides our former party, a virtuoſo from Rome, ſeveral Swiſs, and an adventurer from Palermo, who wore an uniform, and gave himſelf out for a captain, initiated themſelves into our ſociety. It was agreed to ſpend the whole evening here, and to return home by torch-light. The entertainment at the table was good, and the converſation very ſprightly; the Prince could not refrain from relating the adventure of the key, which excited a general aſtoniſhment. A great diſpute aroſe concerning this affair:—The major part of the company had the temerity to think all theſe cunning tricks depended upon witchcraft. The Abbé, who had already drank a ſufficient quantity of wine, challenged the whole kingdom of ghoſts into the ring. The Engliſhman ſwore the muſician croſſed himſelf for the aſ-

ſiſtance

ſiſtance of the Devil. A few, in the number of whom was the Prince, maintained that it was better not to give any decided opinions upon theſe ſubjects. During this converſation the Ruſſian officer entertained himſelf with the ladies, and ſeemed to be perfectly inattentive to the converſation. In the height of this diſpute, no one obſerved that the Sicilian had retired. A ſhort time afterwards he returned, clothed in a mantle, and placed himſelf behind the chair of the Frenchman.

"You have had the boldneſs," ſaid he, "to challenge all the kingdom of ghoſts.—Will you try one?"

"Yes!" ſaid the Abbé, "if you will undertake to bring one before me."

" That I will," replied the Sicilian, turning himſelf about, " when theſe ladies and gentlemen ſhall have left us."

" Why ſo!" exclaimed the Engliſhman, " a jovial ghoſt will enjoy himſelf in ſuch good company."

" I will not anſwer for the conſequences," ſaid the Sicilian.

" Oh, heavens!" cried the ladies, and fled, terrified, from their ſeats.

" Let your ghoſt come," ſaid the Abbé, daringly, but warn him beforehand that he will find here ſharp-pointed tools;" at the ſame time endeavouring to borrow a ſword.

" You may do, in that reſpect, as you pleaſe," ſaid the Sicilian coolly, " when you ſee it."

Here

Here he turned himſelf towards the Prince.

" Gracious Sir," ſaid he to him, " you believe that your key was in ſtrange hands—Can you gueſs in whoſe ?"

" No."

" Do you ſuſpect any body ?"

" I had certainly a ſuſpicion."

" Should you know the perſon if you were to ſee him ?"

" Without doubt."

Here the Sicilian put aſide his mantle, and took from under it a looking-glaſs, which he held before the eyes of the Prince.

" Is this the man?"

The Prince ſtarted back with the utmoſt terror.

" What have you ſeen?" aſked I.

" The Arminian!"

The Sicilian put the glaſs under his mantle.

" Was that the perſon you meant?" enquired the whole company.

" The very ſame."

Upon this every countenance was changed, no one was heard to laugh, and all eyes were fixed attentively upon the Sicilian.

" Monſieur

" Monſieur Abbé," ſaid the Engliſh-man, " this thing becomes ſerious: I adviſe you to think of your retreat."

" The fellow is in league with the Devil," cried the Frenchman, and ruſhed out of the houſe. The ladies ran ſhrieking from the hall—the virtuoſo followed them—the German prelate ſnored in his chair—the Ruſſian remain-ed ſitting as if perfectly indifferent to what was paſſing.

" You thought, perhaps, to have excited a great laugh," ſaid the Prince, " againſt this boaſter, if he had not gone out; or did you intend to have performed what you promiſed?"

" It is true," ſaid the Sicilian, " with the Abbé I was not in earneſt; I took him at his word, becauſe I knew that the coward would not ſuffer me to go ſo far as to put it in execution."

"The thing itſelf is of too ſerious a nature to make a joke of."

"You maintain, then, that you have it in your power to do what you aſſerted?"

The magician was ſilent, and ſeemed to be ſtudying the expreſſive countenance of the Prince.

"Yes," anſwered he, at length.

The curioſity of the Prince was already excited to the higheſt degree, for he had always believed in ſupernatural beings, and this act of the Arminian brought back to his mind all his former reflections on this ſubject, which reaſon had in ſome meaſure driven away. He went aſide with the Sicilian, and I heard him converſing with him very earneſtly.

"You

" You have before you a man," continued he, " who burns with impatience for an explanation of this affair. I would eſteem that man as my benefactor, as my beſt friend, who would, in this reſpect, remove my doubts, and diſſipate the miſt from my eyes.—Will you deſerve this great ſervice at my hands?"

" What do you require of me?" ſaid the magician, with thoughtfulneſs.

" To give me immediately a proof of your art, let me ſee an apparition."

" Why ſhould I do this?"

" That you may judge, from a nearer acquaintance, whether I am worthy of higher inſtruction."

" I eſteem you above all others, mighty Prince. A ſecret power in your countenance, which you yourſelf are ignorant of, bound me at firſt ſight irreſiſtibly to you. You are more powerful than you are aware of. You have an undoubted right to command all my power, but—"

" Then allow me to ſee an apparition."

" I muſt be firſt certain that you do not make this requeſt out of curioſity; for, although the ſupernatural powers are ſubjected to my will in ſome reſpect, it is under the ſacred condition that I do not abuſe my authority."

" My motives are the pureſt. I wiſh for an explanation of facts."

Here

Here they left their places, and approached to a diſtant window, where I could not hear what was ſaid. The Engliſhman, who had alſo heard this converſation, took me aſide.

"Your prince has a noble mind," ſaid he, "but I pity him, for I will bet my life he has to deal with a ſharper."

"That will be proved," ſaid I, "when he comes to inveſtigate this matter."

"Let me tell you," ſaid the Engliſhman, "that the Devil makes himſelf very dear. He will not practiſe his art without touching the caſh. There are nine of us. We will make a collection. This will break the neck of his ſcheme, and perhaps open the eyes of the Prince."

"I am

" I am content."

The Engliſhman immediately threw ſix guineas into a plate, and gathered in the ring. Each gave ſeveral louis. The Ruſſian eſpecially was highly pleaſed at our propoſal: he put a bank note of a hundred ſequins into the plate—a piece of extravagance which ſtartled the Engliſhman. We brought the collection to the Prince.

" Have the goodneſs," ſaid the Engliſhman, " to entreat, in our names, that gentleman to let us ſee a proof of his art, and perſuade him to accept this ſmall token of our acknowledgments for his trouble."

The Prince alſo put a coſtly ring into the plate, and preſented it to the Sicilian. He conſidered of our propoſal

" Gentle-

" Gentlemen," he began, " this unexpected generosity is highly flattering. I obey your wishes. Your desires shall be fulfilled."

In the meantime he rang the bell.

" With respect to this money," he continued, " to which I have no right, if you will give me leave, I will present it to the nearest monastery, as a gratuity towards so benevolent an institution. This ring I shall always keep, as a valuable proof of the goodness of the best of princes."

Here the master of the house entered, to whom he immediately delivered the money.

" He is still a swindler," said the Englishman, " although he refuses the gold. It is done that he may get more into the Prince's favour."

Another

Another ſaid, " the landlord is in league with him."

" What would you wiſh to ſee?" ſaid the Sicilian to the Prince."

" Let us have a great man," ſaid the Lord: " Challenge the Pope Ganginelli; it will be the ſame to this gentleman."

The Sicilian bit his lips.

" I dare not call for one who has received extreme unction."

" That is bad," ſaid the Engliſhman. " Perhaps we ſhould learn from him of what diſorder he died."

" The Marquis of *Lanoy*," ſaid the Prince, " was a French brigadier in a former war, and my moſt intimate friend.

friend. In a battle near Haſtinbeck he received a deadly wound. They took him to my tent, where he ſoon after died in my arms. Before he expired—" Prince," ſaid he, " I ſhall never again behold my native country; I will therefore entruſt you with a ſecret, which is known to no one but myſelf. In a cloiſter upon the borders of Flanders, there lives a——" At that inſtant he expired. Death deſtroyed the thread of his diſcourſe. I could wiſh to have him brought before me, and to hear the concluſion of his tale."

" Well requeſted, by God," ſaid the Engliſhman, " I ſhall eſteem you as the greateſt conjurer in the world, if you comply with this requeſt."

We admired the wiſe choice of the Prince, and unanimouſly gave our conſent to the propoſition. In the mean time

time the magician walked up and down the room with haſty ſteps, and ſeemed to be holding a conference with himſelf.

"And was that all which the deceaſed communicated to you?"

"All."

"Did you make any further enquiries, on account of what you heard, in his native country?"

"It was in vain."

"Did the Marquis of Lanoy live irreproachably? for I dare not call any one I pleaſe from the dead."

"He died with penitence for the ſins of his youth."

"Have

" Have you about you any token of his?"

" Yes."

The Prince had actually a ſnuff-box, on the lid of which a miniature picture of the Marquis was painted in enamel, which he uſually laid near him upon the table.

" I do not deſire to know what it is. Leave me alone: you ſhall ſee the deceaſed."

We were deſired to go into another apartment, and wait until he called for us. At the ſame time he ordered all the moveables to be taken from the hall, the windows to be taken out, and the window ſhutters to be put cloſe to. He alſo ordered the landlord, with whom he had already been conniving, to

to bring in a veſſel filled with hot coals, and to put out all the fires in the houſe carefully with water. Before we returned, he made us all promiſe that we would obſerve a profound ſilence during the whole of what we ſhould ſee or hear. All the doors of the rooms behind us leading to this apartment were faſtened. The clock had ſtruck eleven. A deadly ſilence prevailed through the whole houſe. Before we went out, the Ruſſian ſaid to me—

"Have we any loaded piſtols with us?"

"Why?" ſaid I.

"It is at all events convenient," anſwered he. "Wait a minute, and I will go and ſee after ſome."

He went out, and the Baron and myſelf opened a window which looked towards

towards another room, and we thought we heard people talking together, and a noiſe as if they were placing a ladder under it; but as that might only be a conjecture, I dared not give it out as certain. The Ruſſian returned with a brace of piſtols, after being abſent about half an hour. We ſaw him load them. It was now near two o'clock when the magician appeared again, and announced that he was prepared. Before we returned, he ordered us to pull off our ſhoes, and to appear in our ſhirts, ſtockings, and under garments. The doors as before were all faſtened. We found, when we returned into the hall, a large circle made with coals, in which we could all ſtand very conveniently. Round about the room, and by the four walls, the boards were taken away, ſo that we ſeemed to ſtand as it were upon an iſland. An altar, hung with black cloth, was erected in the middle

middle of the circle, under which was ſpread a carpet of red ſilk; a Chaldean Bible laid open near a death's head upon the altar, and a ſilver crucifix was faſtened in the centre. Inſtead of candles, ſpirits were burning in a ſilver veſſel. A thick ſmoke of olive wood darkened the hall, which almoſt extinguiſhed the lights. The conjurer was clothed as we were, but bare-footed. On his bare neck he wore an amulet * ſuſpended by a chain of human hair. Upon his loins he wore a white mantle, which was decorated with magical characters and myſterious figures. He made us join hands, and maintain a deep ſilence. Above all, he recom-

* Amulet was the name of a charm made of wood or other materials, and on which was engraved particular words and characters, and wore about the neck, to subvert the machinations of the Devil and his agents. They were held in high esteem by the Arabs, Turks, and Jews, and particularly amongſt the Catholics.

mended

mended us not to aſk the apparition any queſtions. He requeſted the Engliſhman and myſelf (for he ſeemed to entertain the greateſt ſuſpicion of us) to hold two drawn ſwords, ſteadily and croſs ways, an inch above his head, as long as the ceremony ſhould laſt. We ſtood in a half circle around him. The Ruſſian officer preſſed near to the Engliſhman, and ſtood next to the altar. The magician placed himſelf upon the carpet, with his face towards the eaſt, ſprinkled holy water to the four corners of the world, and bowed thrice before the Bible. A quarter of an hour paſſed in ceremonious acts, perfectly unintelligible to us; at the end of which, he gave thoſe a ſign who ſtood behind him to hold him faſt by the hair. Struggling apparently with dreadful convulſions, he called the deceaſed by name three times; at the laſt, he ſtretched out his hand towards the crucifix.

cifix. We inſtantly experienced a violent ſhock, which ſeparated our hands. A ſudden clap of thunder ſhook the houſe to its foundation; at the ſame time the window ſhutters rattled, and all the doors were burſt open. The apparatus fell in pieces, and as ſoon as the light was extinguiſhed, we obſerved diſtinctly on the wall over the chimney-piece the figure of a man clothed in a bloody garment, with a pale and livid aſpect.

"Who called me?" cried a faint hollow voice.

"Thy friend," ſaid the conjurer, "who venerates thy memory, and prays for thy ſoul."

At the ſame time he mentioned the name of the Prince.

"What does he want?" continued the ghoſt, after a very long pauſe.

"He

" He wiſhes to hear your confeſſion to the end, which you began in this world but did not finiſh.

" In a cloiſter upon the borders of Flanders there lives—"

Here the houſe ſhook again, the door opened of its own accord, and a violent clap of thunder was heard, as a flaſh of lightning illuminated the room. Immediately another form, bloody and pale like the other, appeared at the threſhold. The ſpirits in the vaſe began to burn again, and the hall was as it firſt appeared.

" Who is among us?" cried the magician, looking with horror and aſtoniſhment at the ſpectators. " I did not much wiſh for thee."

The ghoſt immediately walked with a ſlow and majeſtic ſtep to the altar, and ſtood upon the carpet oppoſite to us. It ſeized the crucifix, and the firſt apparition inſtantly vaniſhed.

" Who is it that has called me?" ſaid the ſecond apparition.

The magician began to tremble. Fear and aſtoniſhment almoſt overpowered us. I now ſeized a piſtol—the magician wreſted it from my hand, and fired at the ghoſt. The ball rolled along the altar, and the figure remained amidſt the ſmoke unhurt. The magician immediately ſunk down in a fit.

" What have we here?" exclaimed the Engliſhman with aſtoniſhment, as he endeavoured to ſtrike the ghoſt with his ſword. The apparition arreſted his arm, and the ſword fell to the ground.

Here

Here the ſweat of anguiſh ſtarted from my forehead, and the Baron confeſſed to us afterwards that he employed himſelf in praying. All this time the Prince ſtood fearleſs and unmoved, with his eyes rivetted upon the figure.

" Yes!" ſaid he at laſt pathetically, " I know thee: thou art Lanoy—thou art my friend. From whence doſt thou come?"

" I cannot divulge the myſteries of eternity.—Aſk me any queſtion that relates to my exiſtence on earth."

" Who lives in the cloiſter," ſaid the Prince, " of which you gave me notice at the hour of your death?"

" My daughter."

"How! Have you ever been a father?"

"I would that I had not been."

"Are you not happy, Lanoy?"

"God is my judge."

"Can I not render you any ſervice in this world?"

"None; but think of yourſelf."

"How muſt I do that?"

"You will learn it at Rome."

Immediately a clap of thunder was heard—a thick ſmoke filled the room; and when it cleared up, the figure had vaniſhed. I puſhed open a window-ſhutter—it was day-light.

The conjurer ſoon recovered his ſenſes.

"Where are we?" he cried, when he ſaw the day-light.

The Ruſſian officer ſtood cloſe behind him; and looking over his ſhoulder,

"Juggler," he ſaid, with a piercing frown, "this is the laſt time thou wilt ever have it in thy power to ſummon another ghoſt to appear on earth."

The Sicilian turned haſtily round; and, looking ſtedfaſtly in his face, uttered a loud ſhriek, and fell ſenſeleſs on the ground. Immediately the pretended Ruſſian was diſcovered by the Prince to be no other perſon than his myſterious friend the Arminian.

No language can paint the horror this circumſtance occaſioned in the mind of the Prince, and the conſternation that generally pervaded the company. We ſtood motionleſs as we ſurveyed this awful being, who penetrated us to the ſoul with his looks. A dead ſilence reigned for ſome minutes: at length ſeveral loud knocks at the door rouſed us from a ſtate of ſtupefaction. The noiſe continued, and the door was ſoon after ſhattered in pieces, when ſeveral police officers, with a guard, ruſhed into the hall.

"Here we find them all together," cried the commander, turning to his followers. "In the name of the government," (addreſſing himſelf to us) cried he, "I arreſt you all."

We had ſcarcely time to recollect ourſelves, ere we were all ſurrounded by

by the guard. The Ruſſian, whom I ſhall now call the Arminian, took the commander aſide; and notwithſtanding the confuſion we were in, I obſerved that he whiſpered ſomething in his ear, and ſhewed him a paper, at the ſight of which the man bowed reſpectfully and retired—as he paſſed us he took off his hat.

"Forgive me, gentlemen," ſaid he, "for having confounded you with this impoſtor. I will not aſk who you are, this perſon aſſures me that I have men of honour before me."

In the meantime he gave his people a hint to withdraw from us. He commanded them, however, to ſeize the Sicilian, and to bind him.

"This fellow has reigned long enough," added he, "we have been

upon the watch for him theſe ſeven months."

This miſerable wretch was indeed an object of pity. The ſudden fright which the ſecond apparition occaſioned, and the unexpected reproach from the Arminian, had overpowered his ſenſes. He ſuffered himſelf to be bound without the leaſt oppoſition. His eyes rolled in his head, and a death-like paleneſs ſpread itſelf over his countenance, as at intervals he heaved convulſive ſighs. Every moment we expected that he would become frantic. The Prince pitied his diſtreſs, and undertook to ſolicit his diſcharge from the leader of the police, to whom he diſcovered his rank.

"Gracious Prince," ſaid the officer, "do you know who this man is? and for whom you ſo generouſly intercede?

The

The tricks which he practiſed to deceive you are the leaſt of his crimes. We have already ſecured his accomplices, and they have diſcovered tranſactions which he has been concerned in of the moſt horrid nature. He may think himſelf well off if he eſcapes with baniſhment to the galleys."

In the meantime we obſerved the landlord and his family fettered and led through the yard.

"Is that man guilty?" cried the Prince. "What has he done?"

"He was his accomplice," ſaid the officer, "and aſſiſted him in his mountebank tricks and robberies, and ſhared the ſpoil with him. I will convince you immediately, graciousSir, of the truth of my aſſertion" (turning towards his followers). "Search the houſe," he

cried, " and bring me immediately intelligence as to what you diſcover."

The Prince looked for the Arminian, but he was gone. In the confuſion which this enexpected circumſtance occaſioned, he found means to ſteal off without being obſerved. The Prince was inconſolable: he determined to ſend ſervants after him, and alſo ſearch for him himſelf; and, hurrying with me to the window, we obſerved the whole houſe ſurrounded by the populace, whom the account of this event had drawn to the ſpot.

" It is impoſſible to make our way through the crowd," ſaid I; " and if it is the intention of the Arminian to elude our ſearch, he certainly knows the means to do it effectually: let us rather ſtay here a little longer, gracious Sir. Perhaps this officer of the police can

can give us ſome information reſpecting him, to whom he has, if I have rightly obſerved, diſcovered himſelf."

We recollected that we were ſtill in an undreſs, and promiſing to return ſoon, we haſtened into a room to put on our clothes as quick as poſſible. When we came back, the ſearching of the houſe was finiſhed. After they had removed the altar, and forced up the boards of the floor, they diſcovered a vault where a man was able to ſit upright, which was ſeparated by a ſecret door from a narrow ſtair-caſe that led to a gloomy cave. In this abyſs they found an electrical machine, a clock, and a ſmall ſilver bell; which laſt, as well as the electrical machine, had a communication with the altar and the crucific that was fixed upon it. A hole had been made in the window-ſhutter oppoſite the chimney, which opened

opened and ſhut with a ſlide. In this hole, as we learnt afterwards, was fixed a magic lanthorn, from which the figure of the ghoſt had been reflected on the oppoſite wall over the chimney. From the garret and the cave they brought ſeveral drums, to which large leaden bullets were faſtened by ſtrings: theſe had probably been uſed to imitate the roaring of thunder which we had heard. In ſearching the Sicilian's clothes, they found in a caſe, different powders, genuine mercury in vials and boxes, phoſphorus in a glaſs bottle, and a ring, which we immediately knew to be magnetic, becauſe it adhered to a ſteel button that had been placed near to it by accident. In his coat pockets was a roſary, a jew's beard, a dagger, and a pocket piſtol.

"Let us ſee if it is loaded," ſaid one of the watch, and fired up the chimney.

"Jeſus

" Jeſus Maria!" cried a voice, which we knew to be the ſame as that we had heard when the firſt ſpirit appeared, and at the ſame inſtant we beheld a bleeding perſon tumbling down the chimney.

" What! not yet at reſt, poor ghoſt?" cried the Engliſhman, whilſt we ſtarted back affrighted. " Go to thy grave. Thou haſt appeared what thou waſt not, and now thou wilt be what thou haſt appeared."

" Jeſus Maria! I am wounded!" replied the man.

The ball had fractured his right leg. Care was immediately taken to have the wound dreſſed.

" But who art thou?" ſaid the Engliſh lord, " and what evil ſpirit brought thee here?"

" I am

" I am a poor ſolitary monk," anſwered the wounded man. " A ſtrange gentleman offered me a zechin to—

" Repeat your magical leſſon.—And why didſt thou not withdraw immediately you had finiſhed?"

" I was waiting for a ſignal to continue my ſpeech, as had been agreed on between us; but as this ſignal was not given, I was endeavouring to get off, when I found the ladder had been removed."

" And what was the formula he taught thee?"

The wounded man fainted: nothing more could be got from him. When we obſerved his features more minutely, we diſcovered him to be the ſame man that ſtood in the path-way of the Prince

the

the evening before, and aſked alms for the Madona. The Prince addreſſed the leader of the watch, giving him at the ſame time ſome pieces of gold.

" You have reſcued us," ſaid he, " from the hands of a deceiver, and done us juſtice even without knowing us—increaſe our gratitude by telling us who the ſtranger was, that, by ſpeaking only a few words, procured us our liberty ?"

" Whom do you mean ?" aſked the officer, with a countenance which ſeemed to indicate that the queſtion was uſeleſs.

" The gentleman in a Ruſſian uniform, who took you aſide, ſhewed you a written paper, and whiſpered in your ear, in conſequence of which you immediately ſet us free."

" Do

"Do not you know the gentleman?" ſaid the officer. "Was he not one of your company?"

"No," ſaid the Prince; "and I have very important reaſons for wiſhing to be acquainted with him."

"He is a perfect ſtranger to me too," replied the officer; "even his name is unknown to me. I ſaw him to-day for the firſt time in my life."

"How! And was he able in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time, and by uſing only a few words, to convince you that we were all innocent?"

"Undoubtedly, Sire, with a ſingle word."

"And this was?—I confeſs I wiſh to know it."

"This

"This ſtranger, my Prince," (weighing the zechins in his hand)—"You have been too generous for me to make it any longer a myſtery—This ſtranger is an officer of the Inquiſition."

"Of the Inquiſition!—What! that man?"

"Nothing elſe, my Prince. I was convinced of it by the paper which he ſhewed to me."

"That man did you ſay? It cannot be."

"I will tell you more, my Prince; it was upon his information that I have been ſent here to arreſt the conjurer."

We looked at each other with the utmoſt aſtoniſhment.

"Now

"Now we know," ſaid the Engliſh Lord, "why the poor devil of a ſorcerer ſtarted when he came near his face. He knew him to be a ſpy, and for that reaſon he made ſuch a horrible outcry and threw himſelf at his feet."

"No!" interrupted the Prince. "This man is whatever he wiſhes to be, and whatever the moment requires him to be. No mortal ever knew what he really was. Did not you ſee the knees of the Sicilian ſink under him, when he ſaid, with a terrible voice: "Thou ſhalt no more call a ghoſt." There is ſomething myſterious in this matter. No perſon can perſuade me that one man ſhould be thus alarmed at the ſight of another, without ſome moſt eſſential reaſon."

"The Conjurer will probably explain it the beſt," ſaid the Engliſh Lord, "if

" if that gentleman (pointing to the officer) will procure us an opportunity of ſpeaking to his priſoner.

The officer conſented to it, and after having agreed with the Engliſhman to viſit the Sicilian in the morning, we returned to Venice *.

Lord Seymour (this was the name of the Engliſhman) called upon us very early in the forenoon, and was ſoon after followed by a perſon whom the officer

* Count O....., whoſe narrative I have thus far literally copied, deſcribes minutely the various effects of this adventure upon the mind of the Prince, and of his companions, and recounts a variety of tales of apparitions, which this event gave occaſion to introduce. I ſhall omit giving them to the reader, on the ſuppoſition that he is as curious as myſelf to know the concluſion of the adventure, and its effects on the conduct of the Prince. I ſhall only add, that the Prince got no ſleep the remainder of the night, and that he waited with impatience for the moment which was to diſcloſe this incomprehenſible myſtery.

had

had intruſted with the care of conducting us to the priſon. I forgot to mention that one of the Prince's domeſtics, a native of Bremen, and who had ſerved him many years with the ſtricteſt fidelity, and who poſſeſſed his confidence, had been miſſing for ſeveral days. Whether he had met with any accident; been kidnapped, or had voluntarily abſented himſelf, was a ſecret to every one. The laſt ſuppoſition was extremely improbable, as his conduct had always been regular and irreproachable. All that his companions could recollect, was, that he had been for ſometime very melancholy, and that, whenever he had a moment's leiſure, he uſed to viſit a certain monaſtery in the *Giudecca*, where he had formed an acquaintance with ſome monks. This led us to ſuppoſe that he might have fallen into the hands of the prieſts, and had been perſuaded to turn Catholick. The Prince

was

was indifferent about matters of this kind, and the few enquiries he cauſed to be made proving unſucceſsful, he gave up the ſearch. He, however, regretted the loſs of this man, who had ſo conſtantly attended him in his campaigns, had always been faithfully attached to him, and whom it was therefore difficult to replace in a foreign country. The very ſame day the Prince's banker, whom he had commiſſioned to provide him with another ſervant, came at the moment we were going out; he preſented to the Prince a well-dreſſed man, of a good appearance, about forty years of age, who had been for a long time ſecretary to a procurator; ſpoke French and a little German, and was beſides furniſhed with the beſt recommendations. The Prince was pleaſed with the man's phyſiognomy; and as he declared that he would be ſatisfied with ſuch wages as his

his ſervice ſhould be found to merit, the Prince engaged him immediately. We found the Sicilian in a private priſon, where, as the keeper aſſured us, he had been lodged for the preſent, to accommodate the Prince, as he was to be confined in future under the lead roofs, to which there is no acceſs. Theſe lead roofs are the moſt terrible dungeons in Venice. They are ſituated on the top of the Palace of St. Mark, and the miſerable criminals ſuffer ſo exceſſively from the heat of the leads, occaſioned by the burning rays of the ſun deſcending directly upon them, that they frequently become diſtracted. The Sicilian had recovered from his terror, and roſe reſpectfully at the ſight of the Prince. He had fetters on one hand and one leg, but he was able to walk about the room. The keeper left the dungeon as ſoon as we had entered.

" I come,"

" I come," ſaid the Prince, " to requeſt an explanation of you on two ſubjects.—You owe me the one, and it ſhall not be to your diſadvantage if you grant me the other."

" My part is now acted," replied the Sicilian. " My deſtiny is in your hands."

" Your ſincerity alone can mitigate your puniſhment."

" Aſk, my Prince, I am ready to anſwer you. I have nothing more to loſe."

" You ſhewed me the face of the Arminian in your looking-glaſs.—How was it done?"

" What you ſaw was no looking-glaſs—a portrait in paſtel behind a glaſs, repreſenting a man in an Arminian dreſs, deceived you. The want of light, your aſtoniſh-

aſtoniſhment, and my own dexterity, favoured the deception. The picture itſelf muſt have been found among the other things ſeized at the inn."

"But how came you ſo well acquainted with my ideas as to hit upon the Arminian?"

"This was not difficult, my Prince. You have perhaps frequently mentioned your adventure with the Arminian at table, in preſence of your domeſtics. One of my ſervants got accidentally acquainted with one of yours in the Giudecca, and ſoon learned from him as much as I wiſhed to know."

"Where is this man?" aſked the Prince; "I miſs him, and in all probability you are acquainted with the place of his retreat, and the reaſon why he deſerted my ſervice."

"I ſwear

" I ſwear to you, gracious Sir, that I know not the leaſt of him. I have never ſeen him myſelf, nor had any other concern with him than the one before-mentioned."

" Go on," ſaid the Prince.

" By this means alſo, I received the firſt information of your reſidence, and of your adventures at Venice; and I reſolved immediately to profit by them. Your Highneſs ſees that I am ingenuous. I was apprized of your intended excurſion on the Brenta—I was prepared for it; and a key, that dropped by chance from your pocket, afforded me the firſt opportunity of trying my art upon you."

" How! Have I been miſtaken? The adventure of the key then was a trick of yours, and not of the Arme-

nian?—You ſay this key fell from my pocket?"

"You accidentally dropped it in taking out your purſe, and I inſtantly covered it with my foot. The perſon of whom you bought the lottery-ticket was in concert with me. He cauſed you to draw it from a box where there was no blank, and the key had been in the ſnuff-box long before it came into your poſſeſſion."

"It is almoſt incomprehenſible—And the monk who ſtopped me in my way, and addreſſed me in a manner ſo ſolemn—"

"Was the ſame that I hear has been wounded in the chimney. He is one of my accomplices, and under that diſguiſe has rendered me many important ſervices."

"But

"But what purpoſe was this intended to anſwer?"

"To render you thoughtful: to inſpire you with ſuch a train of ideas as ſhould be favourable to the wonders I intended to make you believe."

"The pantomimical dance, which ended in a manner ſo extraordinary, was at leaſt none of your contrivance."

"I had taught the girl who repreſented the queen. Her performance was the reſult of my inſtructions. I ſuppoſed your Highneſs would not be a little aſtoniſhed to find yourſelf known in this place, and (I entreat your Highneſs's pardon) your adventure with the Armenian gave room for me to hope that you were already diſpoſed to reject natural interpretations, and to ſearch for the marvellous."

 "Indeed!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Prince, at once angry and amazed, and caſting upon me a ſignificant look—"Indeed, I did not expect this *. But," continued he, after a long ſilence, "how did you produce the figure that appeared on the wall over the chimney?"

"By means of a magic lantern that was fixed in the oppoſite window-ſhut-

* Nor in all probability did my readers. The circumſtance of the crown depoſited at the feet of the Prince, in a manner ſo unexpected and extraordinary, and the former prediction of the Armenian, ſeemed ſo naturally and ſo obviouſly to aim at the ſame object, that at the firſt reading of theſe memoirs, I immediately remembered the deceitful ſpeech of the Witches in the play of Macbeth:

"All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!
"All hail, Macbeth! that ſhalt be king hereafter!"

When a particular idea has once entered the mind, it neceſſarily connects with itſelf every ſubſequent idea that ſeems to have the leaſt affinity to it.

ter,

ter, in which you have, no doubt, obſerved an opening."

"And how did it happen that none of us perceived the lantern?" aſked Lord Seymour.

"You remember, my Lord, that on your re-entering the room, it was darkened by a thick ſmoke of olive wood. I uſed likewiſe the precaution to place upright againſt the wall near the window, the boards which had been taken up from the floor. By theſe means I prevented the ſhutter from coming immediately under your ſight. Moreover, the lantern remained covered until you had taken your places, and until there was no further reaſon to apprehend any examination from the perſons in the hall."

"As I looked out of the window in the other pavilion," ſaid I, "I heard

a noiſe like that of a perſon who was in the act of placing a ladder againſt the ſide of the houſe. Was it really ſo?"

"Yes, my aſſiſtant ſtood upon this ladder to direct the magic-lantern."

"The apparition," continued the Prince, "had really a ſuperficial likeneſs to my deceaſed friend;" and what was particularly ſtriking, his hair, which was of a very light colour, was exactly imitated. Was this mere chance, or how did you come by ſuch a reſemblance?"

"Your Highneſs muſt recollect, that you had at table a ſnuff-box laid by your plate, with an enamelled portrait of an officer in a French uniform. I aſked whether you had any thing about you as a memorial of your friend. Your Highneſs anſwered in the affirmative. I conjectured it might be the box. I had atten-

attentively conſidered the picture during ſupper, and being very expert in drawing, and not leſs happy in taking likeneſſes, I had no difficulty in giving to my ſhade the ſuperficial reſemblance you have perceived, becauſe the Marquis's features are very ſtriking."

"But the figure ſeemed to move?"

"It appeared ſo, yet it was not the figure, but the ſmoke which received its light."

"And the man who fell down in the chimney ſpoke for the apparition?"

"He did."

"But he could not hear your queſtions diſtinctly."

"There was no occaſion for it. Your Highneſs will recollect, that I ordered you

all very ſtrictly not to propoſe any queſtion yourſelves to the apparition. My enquiries and his anſwers were pre-concerted between us; and that no miſtake might happen, I cauſed him to ſpeak at long intervals, which he counted by the beating of a watch."

"You ordered the innkeeper carefully to extinguiſh every fire in the houſe. This was, undoubtedly—"

"To ſave the man from the danger of being ſmothered; becauſe the chimnies in the houſe communicate with each other, and I did not think myſelf very ſecure from your retinue."

"How did it happen," aſked Lord Seymour, "that your ghoſt appeared neither ſooner nor later than you wiſhed him?"

"The

" The ghoſt was in the room for ſome time before I called him; but while the room was lighted, the ſhade was too faint to be perceived. When the formula of the conjuration was finiſhed, I cauſed the cover of the box, in which the ſpirit was burning, to drop down; the hall was darkened, and it was not till then that the figure on the wall could be diſtinctly ſeen, although it had been reflected there a conſiderable time before."

" When the ghoſt appeared, we all felt an electrical ſtroke. How was that managed?"

" You have diſcovered the machine under the altar. You have alſo ſeen, that I was ſtanding upon a ſilk carpet. I ordered you to form a half moon around me, and to take hold of each other's hand. When the criſis ap-

 proached,

proached, I gave a ſign to one of you to ſeize me by the hair. The ſilver crucifix was the conductor, and you felt the electrical ſhock when I touched it with my hand."

"You ordered Count O . . . . and myſelf," continued Lord Seymour, "to hold two naked ſwords acroſs over your head, during the whole time of the conjuration; for what purpoſe?"

"For no other than to engage your attention during the operation; becauſe I diſtruſted you two the moſt. You remember, that I expreſsly commanded you to hold the ſwords one inch above my head; by confining you exactly to this diſtance, I prevented you from looking where I did not wiſh you. I had not then perceived my principal enemy."

"I own,"

"I own," ſaid Lord Seymour, "you acted cautiouſly; but why were we obliged to appear undreſſed?"

"Merely to give a greater ſolemnity to the ſcene, and to fill your imaginations with the idea of ſomething extraordinary."

"The ſecond apparition prevented your ghoſt from ſpeaking," ſaid the Prince; "what ſhould we have learnt from him?"

"Nearly the ſame as what you heard afterwards. It was not without deſign that I aſked your Highneſs whether you had told me every thing that the deceaſed communicated to you, and whether you had made any further enquiries on this ſubject in his country? I thought this was neceſſary, in order to prevent the depoſition of the ghoſt

from being contradicted by facts that you were previouſly acquainted with. Knowing likewiſe that every man, eſpecially in his youth, is liable to error, I enquired whether the life of your friend had been irreproachable, and on your anſwer I founded that of the ghoſt."

"Your explanation of this matter is in ſome meaſure ſatisfactory; but there remains yet one material circumſtance which I muſt inſiſt upon being cleared up."

"If it be in my power, and—"

"I ſhall not liſten to any conditions. Juſtice, into whoſe hands you are fallen, ought not, perhaps, to deal with you ſo delicately. Who was the man at whoſe feet we ſaw you fall? What do you know of him? How did you get acquainted with him? and what do you know of the ſecond apparition?

"Your

" Your Highneſs....."

" Heſitate not a moment. Recollect, that on looking at the Ruſſian officer attentively, you ſcreamed aloud, and fell on your knees before him. What are we to underſtand by that?"

" That man, my Prince....." He ſtopped, grew viſibly pale and perplexed, and, looking around him with an awful trepidation—" Yes, your Highneſs," he continued, " that man is a terrible being."

" What do you know of him? What connection have you with him? Do not conceal the truth from us."

" I will not; but—I am not certain that he is not among us at this very moment?"

" Where?

" Where? Who!" exclaimed we all together, looking fearfully about the room. " It is impoſſible."

" That man, or whatever elſe he may be, is a being incomprehenſible; all things ſeem poſſible for him to do."

" Who is he? Whence does he come? Is he Armenian or Ruſſian? Of the characters he aſſumes, which is his real one."

" He is not what he appears to be. There are few conditions or countries in which he has not worn the maſk. No perſon knows who he is, whence he comes, or whither he goes. Some ſay he has been for a long time in Egypt, and that he has brought from thence, out of a catacomb, his occult ſciences. Here we only know him by the name of

of the Incomprehenſible. How old, for inſtance, do you think he is?"

"To judge from his appearance, he can ſcarcely have paſſed forty."

"And of what age do you ſuppoſe I am?"

"Not far from fifty."

"Well, and I muſt tell you, that I was but a boy of ſeventeen, when my grandfather ſpoke to me of this extraordinary man, whom he had ſeen at Famaguſta; at which time he appeared nearly of the ſame age as he does at preſent."

"Impoſſible," ſaid the Prince; "it is ridiculous, and incredible."

"By no meáns, Sir. Were I not prevented by theſe fetters, I could produce

duce vouchers that would readily confirm my aſſertion. There are ſeveral credible perſons who remember having ſeen him, each at the ſame time, in different parts of the globe. No ſword can wound—no poiſon hurt—no fire burn him—no veſſel in which he embarks can be ſhipwrecked or ſunk: time itſelf ſeems to have no influence over him; years do not affect his conſtitution, nor age whiten his hair. He was never ſeen to take any food. Never did he approach a woman. No ſleep cloſes his eyes. Of the twenty-four hours in the day, there is only one which he cannot command, during which no perſon ever ſaw him, and during which he never was employed in any terreſtrial occupation."

"And this hour is—"

"That of midnight. When the clock ſtrikes twelve, he ceaſes to belong to the

the living. In whatever place he is, he muſt immediately be gone; whatever buſineſs he is engaged in, he muſt inſtantly leave it. That dreadful hour tears him from the arms of friendſhip, hurries him from the ſacred altar, and would, even in the agonies of death, drag him from his bed. His haunt has never been diſcovered, nor his engagements at that hour known. No perſon ventures to interrogate, and ſtill leſs to follow him. As the hour approaches, his features are enveloped in the gloom of melancholy, and ſo terrifying that no perſon has courage to look him in the face or to ſpeak a word to him. However lively the converſation may have been, a dead ſilence immediately ſucceeds it, and all around him wait for his return in awful horror, without venturing to quit their ſeats, or to open the door through which he has paſſed."

" Does

" Does nothing extraordinary appear in his perſon when he returns?"

" Nothing, except that he ſeems pale and languid, nearly in the ſtate of a man who has juſt ſuffered a painful operation, or received diſaſtrous intelligence. Some pretend to have ſeen drops of blood on his linen, but with what degree of veracity I cannot affirm."

" Did no perſon ever attempt to conceal the approach of this hour from him, or endeavour to engage him in ſuch diverſions as might make him forget it?"

" Once only, it is ſaid, he paſſed the fatal hour. The company was numerous, and remained together until late at night. All the clocks and watches were purpoſely ſet wrong, and the warmth of converſation di-

verted

verted his attention. When the moment arrived, he ſuddenly became ſilent and motionleſs; his limbs continued in the poſition in which this inſtant had arreſted them; his eyes were fixed, his pulſe ceaſed to beat; all the means employed to awake him proved fruitleſs, and this ſituation endured till the hour had elapſed; he then revived on a ſudden, and continued his ſpeech from the ſame ſyllable that he was pronouncing at the moment of interruption. The general conſternation diſcovered to him what had happened; and he declared, with an awful ſolemnity, that they ought to think themſelves happy in having eſcaped with no other injury than fear. The ſame night he quitted for ever the place where this circumſtance had occurred. The common opinion is, that during this myſterious hour he converſes with his attendant ſpirits. Some even ſuppoſe him to be one of the departed,

who

who is allowed to pass twenty-three hours of the day among the living, and that in the twenty-fourth his soul is obliged to return to the infernal regions to suffer its punishment. Some believe him to be the famous Apollonius of Tyana *, and others the disciple of St. John the Baptist, of whom it

* Apollonius, a Pythagorean philosopher, was born at Tyana, in Capadocia, about three or four years before the birth of Christ. At sixteen years of age he became a strict observer of Pythagorean rules, renouncing wine, women, and all sorts of flesh; not wearing shoes, letting his hair grow, and clothing himself with nothing but linen. He soon after set up for a reformer of mankind, and chose his habitation in the temple of Esculapius, where he is said to have performed many miraculous cures. On his coming of age, he gave part of his wealth to his eldest brother, distributed another part to some poor relations, and kept very little for himself. There are numberless fabulous stories recounted of him. He went five years without speaking, and yet, during this time, he stopped many seditions in Cicilia and Pamphylia. He travelled, set up for a legislator, and gave out that he understood all languages

it is ſaid that he ſhall remain wandering on the earth until the day of judgment."

"A character ſo wonderful," replied the Prince, "cannot fail to give riſe to extraordinary conjectures. But all this you profeſs to know only by hearſay; and yet this behaviour to you, and yours to him, ſeemed to indicate a more intimate acquaintance. Is it not founded

languages without having ever learned them. He could tell the thoughts of men, and underſtood the oracles which birds delivered by their ſinging. The Heathens oppoſed the pretended miracles of this man to thoſe of our Saviour, and gave the preference to this philoſopher. After having for a long time impoſed upon the world, and gained a great number of diſciples, he died in a very advanced age about the end of the firſt century. His life, which is filled with abſurdities, was written by Philoſtratus, and M. du Pin has publiſhed a confutation of Apollonius's life, in which he proves, that the miracles of this pretended philoſopher carry ſtrong marks of falſehood, and that there is not one which may not be aſcribed to chance or artifice. Apollonius himſelf wrote ſome works, which are now loſt.

upon

upon ſome particular event, in which yourſelf have been concerned? Conceal nothing from us."

The Sicilian remained ſilent, as if uncertain whether he ſhould ſpeak or not.

"If it concern any thing," ſaid the Prince, "that you do not wiſh to publiſh, I promiſe you by my honour, and before theſe gentlemen, the moſt inviolable ſecreſy; but ſpeak openly, and without reſerve."

"Could I hope," anſwered the priſoner at laſt, "that you would not produce theſe gentlemen as evidence againſt me, I would tell you a remarkable adventure of this Armenian, to which I myſelf was witneſs, and which will leave you no doubt of his ſupernatural powers. But I beg leave to conceal ſome names."

"Cannot

" Cannot you do it without this condition?"

" No, your Highneſs: there is a family concerned in it which I muſt reſpect."

" Let us hear then!"

" Above five years ago, being at Naples, where I practiſed my art with ſucceſs, I became acquainted with a perſon of the name of Lorenzo del M.... chevalier of the order of St. Stephen, a young and rich nobleman of one of the firſt families in the kingdom, who loaded me with civilities, and ſeemed to have a great eſteem for my occult ſcience. He told me, that the Marquis del M.... his father, was a zealous admirer of the cabbala *, and

* Cabbala is properly a myſterious kind of ſcience delivered by revelation to the ancient Jews, and tranſmitted by oral tradition to thoſe of our times; ſerving

and would think himſelf happy in having a philoſopher like me (for ſuch he was pleaſed to call me) under his roof. The Marquis reſided in one of his country ſeats on the ſea ſhore, about ſeven miles from Naples; and there, almoſt entirely ſecluded from the world, he mourned the loſs of a beloved ſon, of whom he had been deprived by a fatal and melancholy accident. The

ſerving for the interpretation of difficult paſſages in ſcripture, and to diſcover future events by the combination of particular words, letters, and numbers. It is likewiſe termed the oral law. But Cabbala, among the Chriſtians, is alſo applied to the uſe, or rather abuſe, which viſionaries and enthuſiaſts make of ſcripture for diſcovering futurity, by the ſtudy and conſideration of the combination of certain words, letters, and numbers in the ſacred writings. All the words, terms, magic characters, or figures, with ſtones and taliſmans, numbers, letters, charms, &c. in magic operations, are compriſed under this ſpecies of Cabbala, and the word is uſed for any kind of magic, on account of the reſemblance this art bears to the Jewiſh Cabbala. The Jews, however, never uſe the word in any ſuch ſenſe, but always with the utmoſt reſpect and veneration.

Chevalier

Chevalier gave me to underſtand, that he and his family might perhaps have occaſion to employ my ſecret arts in obtaining ſome very important intelligence, to procure which every natural means had been exhauſted in vain. He added, with a very ſignificant look, that he himſelf might perhaps at ſome future period conſider me as the author of all his earthly happineſs. I did not chooſe to preſs him for an explanation. The affair was as follows: "Lorenzo, being the youngeſt ſon of the Marquis, had been deſtined for the church. The family eſtates were to devolve to the eldeſt. Jeronymo, which was the name of the latter, had ſpent many years on his travels, and returned to his country about ſeven years prior to the event which I am about to relate, in order to celebrate his marriage with the only daughter of a neighbouring count. This marriage had been determined on by the

parents during the infancy of the children, in order to unite the very large fortunes of the two houſes. But though this agreement was made by the two families without conſulting the hearts of the parties concerned, the latter had ſecretly entertained an affection for each other. Jeronymo del M... and Antonia C... had been always brought up together, and the little conſtraint impoſed on two children, whom their parents were already accuſtomed to regard as united, ſoon produced between them a connection of the tendereſt kind. The congeniality of their tempers cemented this intimacy, and in riper years it matured inſenſibly into love. An abſence of four years, far from cooling this paſſion, had only ſerved to inflame it, and Jeronymo returned to the arms of his intended bride as faithful and as ardent as if they had never been ſeparated. The raptures occaſioned by his

return

return had not ſubſided, nor the preparations for the happy day diſcontinued, when Jeronymo diſappeared. He uſed frequently to paſs the afternoon in a ſummer-houſe which commanded a proſpect of the ſea, and was accuſtomed to take the diverſion of ſailing on the water. One day, when he was at his favourite retirement, it was obſerved that he remained a much longer time than uſual without returning, and his friends began to be very uneaſy on his account. Boats were diſpatched after him, veſſels were ſent to ſea in queſt of him—no perſon had ſeen him—none of his ſervants could have attended him, for none of them were abſent—night came on, and he did not appear. The next morning dawned—the day paſſed—the evening ſucceeded—Jeronymo came not. Already had they begun to give themſelves up to the moſt melancholy conjectures,

when the news arrived, that an Algerine pirate had landed the preceding day on that coaſt, and carried off ſeveral of the inhabitants. Two galleys, ready equipped, were immediately ordered to ſea. The old Marquis himſelf embarked in one of them, to attempt the deliverance of his ſon at the peril of his own life. On the third day they perceived the corſair. The wind was favourable—they were juſt about to overtake him, and even approached ſo near to him, that Lorenzo, who was in one of the gallies, fancied that he ſaw, upon the deck of the adverſary's ſhip, a ſignal made by his brother, when a ſudden ſtorm ſeparated the veſſels. Hardly could the almoſt ſhipwrecked galleys ſuſtain the fury of the tempeſt. The pirate, in the meantime had diſappeared, and the diſtreſſed ſtate of the other veſſels obliged them to put into Malta. The affliction of the family was beyond all bounds.

The

The diſtracted old Marquis tore his grey hairs in the utmoſt violence of grief, and the life of the young Counteſs was deſpaired of. Five years were conſumed after this event in fruitleſs enquiries; diligent ſearch was made all along the coaſt of Barbary; and immenſe ſums were offered for the ranſom of the young Marquis, but to no purpoſe. The only conjecture which could be founded on probability was, that the ſame ſtorm which had ſeparated the galleys from the pirate had deſtroyed the latter veſſel, and that the whole ſhip's company had periſhed in the waves. But this ſuppoſition, however probable, as it did not by any means amount to a certainty, could not authorize the family to renounce the hope that the abſent Jeronymo might again appear. In caſe however that he did not, either the family's name muſt be ſuffered to periſh, or the youngeſt ſon muſt relinquiſh the church, and en-

ter into the rights of the eldeſt. Juſtice ſeemed to oppoſe the latter meaſure; and on the other hand, the neceſſity of preſerving the family from annihilation required that the ſcruple ſhould not be carried too far. In the meantime, ſorrow, added to the weight of age, was bringing the Marquis faſt to his grave. Every unſucceſsful attempt ſerved to increaſe his diſtreſs, and diminiſh the hope of finding his loſt ſon. He ſaw that his name might be perpetuated by acting with a little injuſtice, in conſenting to favour his younger ſon at the expence of the elder. The fulfilment of his agreement with Count C. . . . required only the change of a name; for the object of the two families was equally accompliſhed, whether Antonia became the wife of Lorenzo or of Jeronymo. The faint probability of the latter's appearing again weighed but little againſt the certain and preſſing danger of the total

total extinction of the family; and the old Marquis, who considered his dissolution fast approaching, ardently wished to die free from this inquietude. Lorenzo alone, who was to be principally benefited by this measure, opposed it with the greatest obstinacy. He resisted with equal firmness the allurements of an immense fortune, and the attractions of a beautiful and accomplished object ready to be delivered into his arms. He refused, on principles the most generous and conscientious, to invade the rights of a brother, who for any thing he knew might himself be in a capacity to resume them.

"Is not the lot of my Jeronymo," said he, "made sufficiently miserable by the horrors of a long captivity, without the aggravation of being deprived for ever of all that he holds most dear? With what conscience could I suppli-

cate Heaven for his return, when his wife is in my arms? With what countenance could I meet him, if at laſt he ſhould be reſtored to us by a miracle? And even ſuppoſing that he is torn from us for ever, can we honour his memory better than by keeping conſtantly open the chaſm which his death has cauſed in our circle? Can we better ſhew our reſpects to him than by ſacrificing our deareſt hopes upon his tomb, and keeping untouched as a ſacred depoſit, what was peculiarly his own."

But theſe arguments of fraternal delicacy could not reconcile the old Marquis to the idea of being obliged to witneſs the decay of a tree which nine centuries had beheld flouriſhing. All that Lorenzo could obtain was a delay of two years. During this period they continued their enquiries with the utmoſt diligence. Lorenzo himſelf made

made ſeveral voyages, and expoſed his perſon to many dangers. No trouble, no expence, was ſpared to recover the loſt Jeronymo. Theſe two years, however, like thoſe which preceded them, were conſumed in vain.

" And Antonia," ſaid the Prince. " You tell us nothing of her. Could ſhe ſo calmly ſubmit to her fate? I cannot ſuppoſe it."

" Antonia," anſwered the Sicilian, " experienced the moſt violent ſtruggle between duty and inclination, between diſlike and admiration. The diſintereſted generoſity of a brother affected her. She felt herſelf forced to eſteem a perſon whom ſhe could never love. Her heart, torn by contrary ſentiments, felt the bittereſt diſtreſs; but her repugnance to the Chevalier ſeemed to increaſe in the ſame degree as his

claims upon her eſteem augmented. Lorenzo perceived with heartfelt ſorrow the ſecret grief that conſumed her youth. An unconquerable ſympathy for her misfortune inſenſibly eradicated that indifference with which till then we had been accuſtomed to conſider her. But this deluſive ſentiment deceived him, and an ungovernable paſſion began rapidly to ſhake the ſteadineſs of his virtue, which till then had been unequalled. He, however, ſtill obeyed the dictates of generoſity, though at the expence of his love. By his efforts alone was the unfortunate victim protected againſt the cruel and arbitrary proceedings of the reſt of the family. But his endeavours were ineffectual. Every victory he gained over his paſſion rendered him more worthy of Antonia, and the diſintereſtedneſs with which he refuſed her, left her without an apology for reſiſtance. Thus were affairs ſituated,

ated, when the Chevalier engaged me to viſit him at his father's villa. The earneſt recommendation of my patron procured me a reception which exceeded my moſt ſanguine wiſhes. I muſt not forget to mention, that by ſome remarkable operations I had previouſly rendered my name famous in different lodges of free-maſons. This circumſtance perhaps contributed to ſtrengthen the old Marquis's confidence in me, and to heighten his expectations. I beg you will excuſe me from deſcribing particularly the lengths I went with him, or the means which I employed. You may form ſome judgment of them from what I have before confeſſed to you. Profiting by the myſtic books which I found in his very extenſive library, I was ſoon able to ſpeak to him in his own language, and to adorn my ſyſtem of the inviſible world with the moſt

extraordinary inventions. He was therefore with ſo little difficulty induced to credit the fables I taught him, that in a ſhort time he would have believed as implicitly in the ſecret commerce of philoſophers and ſylphs as in any article of the canon. The Marquis, being very religious, had acquired in the ſchool of theology a facility of belief, which cauſed him at once to be faſcinated with the ſtories I told him, and to put the moſt unreſerved confidence in my character. At length I entangled him ſo completely in myſtery, that he would no longer believe any thing that was natural. In ſhort, I became the adored apoſtle of the houſe. The uſual ſubject of my lectures was the exaltation of human nature, and the intercourſe of men with ſuperior things; the infallible Count Gabolis * was my oracle.

* A myſtical work written in French by the Abbe de Villars.

Antonia,

Antonia, whoſe mind ſince the loſs of her lover had been more occupied in the world of ſpirits, than in that of nature, and who had a ſtrong tincture of melancholy in her compoſition, caught every hint I gave her with a fearful ſatisfaction. Even the ſervants contrived to have ſome buſineſs in the room when I was ſpeaking, and, ſeizing part of my converſation, formed from it myſterious preſages.—Two months were paſſed in this manner at the Marquis's villa, when the Chevalier one morning entered my apartment—His features had experienced a conſiderable alteration, and from his ſorrowful countenance I ſuſpected that ſomething preyed upon his mind.—He threw himſelf upon a couch with every ſymptom of deſpair.

"I am diſtracted, ruined," ſaid he; "I muſt, I cannot ſupport it any longer."

"What

" What is the matter with you, Chevalier? What has befallen you?"

" Oh! this terrible paſſion!" ſaid he, ſtarting from his ſeat, and throwing himſelf into my arms. " I have combated againſt it like a man, but can reſiſt it no longer."

" And whoſe fault is it but your own, my dear Chevalier? Are they not all willing to gratify this paſſion? Your father! Your relations!"

" My father, my relations! What are they to me? I want not to be united to her by force—Have not I a rival? Alas! and what a rival! Perhaps a dead one! Oh! let me go, let me go to the end of the world; I muſt find my brother."

" What! after ſo many unſucceſsful attempts, have you ſtill any hope?"

" Hope!

" Hope! Alas, no. It has long ſince been baniſhed from my heart, but it has not from her's; of what conſequence are my ſentiments? Is it poſſible that I ſhould be happy whilſt there remains a gleam of hope in Antonia's breaſt? Two words, my friend, would end my torments, but in vain; my deſtiny muſt continue to be miſerable, till eternity ſhall break its long ſilence, and the grave ſhall ſpeak in my behalf."

" Is it then a ſtate of certainty that would render you happy?"

" Happy! Alas! I doubt whether I ſhall ever be happy again; but uncertainty is of all others the moſt dreadful affliction."

After a ſhort interval of ſilence, he continued with an emotion leſs violent:

" If

" If he could ſee my torments! Surely a conſtancy which renders his brother miſerable cannot add to his happineſs! Can it be juſt, that the living ſhould ſuffer ſo much for the ſake of the dead; that I ſhould fruitleſsly pine for an object which Jeronymo can no longer enjoy? If he knew the pangs I ſuffer, (ſaid he, concealing his face while the tears ſtreamed from his eyes) perhaps he himſelf would conduct her to my arms."

" But is there no poſſibility of gratifying your wiſhes?"

" He ſtarted! What do you ſay, my friend?"

" Leſs important occaſions than the preſent," ſaid I, " have diſturbed the repoſe of the dead for the ſake of the living; is not the terreſtrial happineſs of a man, of a brother—"

" The

" The terreſtrial happineſs! Ah, my friend, I feel but too ſenſibly the force of your expreſſion—my entire felicity!"

" And the tranquillity of a diſtreſſed family, are not theſe ſufficient to juſtify ſuch a meaſure? Undoubtedly, if any ſublunary concern can authorize us to interrupt the peace of the bleſſed, to make uſe of a power—"

" For God's ſake, my friend!" ſaid he, interrupting me, " no more of this—once, I avow it, I had ſuch a thought; I think I mentioned it to you; but I have long ſince rejected it as horrid and abominable."

" You will have conjectured already," continued the Sicilian, " to what this converſation led us; I endeavoured to overcome the ſcruples of the Chevalier, and at laſt ſucceeded.—We reſolved to call

call the ghoſt of the deceaſed Jeronymo; I only ſtipulated for a delay of a fortnight, in order, as I pretended, to prepare, in a ſuitable manner, for an act ſo ſolemn.—The time being expired, and my machinery in readineſs, I took advantage of a very gloomy day, when we were all aſſembled as uſual, to communicate the affair to the family, and not only brought them to conſent to it, but even to make it a ſubject of their own requeſt.—The moſt difficult part of the taſk was to obtain the approbation of Antonia, whoſe preſence was eſſential.—My endeavours were, however, greatly aſſiſted by the melancholy turn of her mind, and perhaps ſtill more ſo, by a faint hope, that Jeronymo might ſtill be living, and therefore would not appear.—A want of confidence in the thing itſelf was the only obſtacle which I had to remove.—Having obtained the conſent of the family, the third day was

fixed

fixed on for the operation; I prepared then for the ſolemn tranſaction, by myſtical inſtruction, faſting, ſolitude and prayers, which I ordered to be continued till late in the night.—Much uſe was alſo made of a certain muſical inſtrument*, unknown till that time; and, in ſuch caſes, it has often been found very powerful.—The effect of theſe artifices was ſo much beyond my expectation, that the enthuſiaſm which on this occaſion I was obliged to ſhew, was infinitely heightened by that of my audience.—The long expected moment at laſt arrived.

"I gueſs," ſaid the Prince, "whom you are now going t ointroduce.—But go on, go on."

"Your Highneſs is miſtaken.—The deception ſucceeded according to my wiſhes."

* The Eolian harp.

"How!

" How! Where then is the Armenian?"

" Your Highneſs's patience: he will appear but too ſoon. I omit the deſcription of the juggling farce itſelf, as it would be too tedious to relate.—It is ſufficient to ſay, that it anſwered my expectation; the old Marquis, the young Counteſs, her mother, Lorenzo, and ſeveral other perſons of the family were preſent.—You will imagine, that during my long reſidence in the houſe I took all opportunities of gathering information reſpecting every thing that concerned the deceaſed.—Several of his portraits enabled me to give the apparition a ſtriking likeneſs; and as I ſuffered the ghoſt to ſpeak only by ſigns, that the ſound of his voice might excite no ſuſpicion, the departed Jeronymo appeared in the dreſs of a Mooriſh Slave, with a deep wound in his neck.—You obſerve,

obſerve, that in this reſpect I was counteracting the general ſuppoſition that he had periſhed in the waves, I had reaſon to hope, that this unexpected circumſtance would heighten the belief in the apparition itſelf; for nothing appeared to me more dangerous than to be too natural."

"I think you judged well," ſaid the Prince; "in whatever reſpects apparitions, the moſt probable is the leaſt acceptable. If their communications are eaſily comprehended, we undervalue the channel by which they are obtained; nay, we even ſuſpect the reality of the miracle, if the diſcoveries which it brings to light are ſuch as might eaſily have been imagined.—Why ſhould we diſturb the repoſe of a ſpirit, to inform us of nothing more than the ordinary powers of the intellect are capable of teaching us?—

But,

But, on the other hand, if the intelligence which we receive be extraordinary and unexpected, it confirms, in ſome degree, the miracle by which it is obtained; for who can doubt an operation to be ſupernatural, when its effect could not be produced by natural means? I have interrupted you," added the Prince. "Proceed in your narrative."

"I aſked the ghoſt, whether there was any thing in this world which he ſtill conſidered as his own, and whether he had left any thing behind that was particularly dear to him? The ghoſt thrice ſhook his head, and lifted up his hands towards heaven. Previous to his retiring, he dropt a ring from his finger, which was found on the floor after he had diſappeared; Antonia took it, and, looking at it attentively, ſhe knew it to be the wedding-ring ſhe had preſented to her intended huſband."

"The

"The wedding-ring!" exclaimed the Prince, with ſurpriſe. "How did you get it?"

"Who?—I!—It was not the true one!—I procured it.—It was only a counterfeit."

"A counterfeit!" repeated the Prince. But in order to counterfeit, you muſt have been in poſſeſſion of the true one. How did you come at it? Surely the deceaſed never went without it."

"That is true," replied the Sicilian, apparently confuſed. "But, from a deſcription which was given me of the original wedding-ring——"

"A deſcription which was given you! by whom?"

"Long before that time. It was a plain gold ring, and had, I believe, the name

name of the young Counteſs engraved on it. But you made me loſe the connection."

"What happened farther?" ſaid the Prince, with a very diſſatisfied countenance.

"The family fancied themſelves convinced that Jeronymo was no more. From that very day they publicly announced his death, and went into mourning. The circumſtance of the ring left no doubt even in the mind of Antonia, and added a conſiderable weight to the addreſſes of the Chevalier.

"In the mean time, the violent impreſſion which the young Counteſs had received from the ſight of the apparition brought on her a diſorder ſo dangerous, that the hopes of Lorenzo were very near being deſtroyed for ever. On her recovering,

recovering, ſhe inſiſted upon taking the veil; and it was only by the ſerious remonſtrances of her confeſſor, in whom ſhe placed an implicit confidence, that ſhe was brought to abandon her project. At length, the united ſolicitations of the family, aided by the confeſſor, wreſted from her the deſired conſent. The laſt day of mourning was fixed on for the day of marriage, and the old Marquis determined to add to the ſolemnity of the occaſion, by reſigning all his eſtates to his lawful heir. The day arrived, and Lorenzo received his trembling bride at the altar. In the evening, a ſplendid banquet was prepared for the gueſts, in a hall ſuperbly illuminated. The moſt lively and delightful muſic contributed to increaſe the general joy of the aſſembly. The venerable Marquis wiſhed all the world to participate in his felicity. The gates of the palace were thrown open, and every one that came in was

joyfully welcomed. In the midſt of the throng" — The Sicilian pauſed — A trembling expectation ſuſpended our breath.

" In the midſt of the throng," continued the priſoner, " appeared a Franciſcan monk, to whom my attention was directed by a perſon who ſat next to me at table.

" He was ſtanding motionleſs like a marble pillar. His ſhape was tall and thin; his face pale and ghaſtly; his aſpect grave and mournful; and his eyes were fixed on the new-married couple. The joy which beamed on the face of every one preſent, appeared not on his. His countenance never once varied.—He ſeemed like a ſtatue among living perſons. Such an object, appearing amidſt the general joy, ſtruck me more forcibly from its contraſt with every thing

thing around me. It left on my mind ſo durable an impreſſion, that from it alone I have been enabled (which would otherwiſe have been impoſſible) to recollect in the Ruſſian officer the features of this Franciſcan monk; for without doubt you muſt have already conceived, that the perſon I have deſcribed was no other than your Armenian. I frequently attempted to withdraw my eyes from this figure, but they returned involuntarily, and found him always unaltered. I pointed him out to the perſon who ſat neareſt to me on the other ſide, and he did the ſame to the perſon next to him. In a few minutes, a general curioſity and aſtoniſhment pervaded the whole company. The converſation languiſhed; a general ſilence ſucceeded; nor did the monk interrupt it. He continued motionleſs, and always the ſame; his grave and mournful looks conſtantly fixed upon the new-

married couple:—His appearance ſtruck every one with terror. The young Counteſs alone, who found the tranſcript of her own ſorrow in the face of the ſtranger, beheld with a ſullen ſatisfaction the only object that ſeemed to ſympathize in her ſufferings. The crowd inſenſibly diminiſhed, for it was paſt midnight. The muſic became faint and languid; the tapers grew dim, and many of them went out. The converſation, declining by degrees, loſt itſelf at laſt in ſecret murmurs, and the faintly illuminated hall was nearly deſerted. The monk, in the mean time, continued motionleſs, his grave and mournful look ſtill fixed on the new-married couple. The company at length roſe from the table. The gueſts diſperſed. The family aſſembled in a ſeparate group, and the Monk, though uninvited, continued near them. How it happened that no perſon ſpoke to him, I cannot conceive.

" The

" The female friends now ſurrounded the trembling bride, who caſt a ſupplicating and diſtreſſed look on the awful ſtranger; but he did not anſwer it. The gentlemen aſſembled in the ſame manner around the bridegroom. A ſolemn and anxious ſilence prevailed among them.

" At length—" How happy we are here together!" ſaid the old Marquis, who alone ſeemed not to behold the ſtranger, or at leaſt ſeemed to behold him without diſmay:—" How happy we are here together, and my ſon Jeronymo cannot be with us!"

" Have you not invited him, and did not he anſwer your invitation?"—aſked the Monk.

"It was the firſt time he had ſpoken. We looked at him alarmed.

"Alas! he is gone to a place whence there is no return,"—anſwered the old man.—"Reverend father! You miſunderſtood me. My ſon Jeromymo is dead."

"Perhaps he only fears to appear in this company,"—replied the Monk.—"Who knows how your ſon Jeronymo may be ſituated? Let him now hear the voice which he heard the laſt. Deſire your ſon Lorenzo to call him."

"What does he mean?" whiſpered the company one to another.

"Lorenzo changed colour. My own hair almoſt ſtood erect on my head. In the mean time the Monk approached

ed a ſideboard. He took a glaſs of wine, and bringing it to his lips,—"To the memory of our dear Jeronymo!" ſaid he; "Every one who loved the deceaſed will follow my example."

"Wherever you come from, reverend father," exclaimed the old Marquis—"you have pronounced a dearly beloved name, and you are welcome here;" then turning to us, he offered us full glaſſes—"Come, my friends! let us not be ſurpaſſed by a ſtranger. "The memory of my ſon Jeronymo?"

"Never, I believe, was any toaſt leſs heartily received.

"There is one glaſs left," ſaid the Marquis.—"Why does my ſon Lorenzo refuſe to pay this friendly tribute?"

"Lorenzo, trembling, received the glaſs from the hands of the Monk. Trembling he put it to his lips. "My dearly beloved brother Jeronymo!" The name trembled on his tongue, and, being ſeized with horror, he replaced the glaſs unemptied.

"That is the voice of my murderer!" exclaimed a terrible figure, which appeared inſtantaneouſly in the midſt of us, covered with blood, and disfigured with horrible wounds.

"But aſk nothing further from me," added the Sicilian, with every ſymptom of horror in his countenance. "I loſt my ſenſes the moment I looked at this apparition. The ſame happened to every one preſent. When we recovered, the Monk and the ghoſt had diſappeared. Lorenzo was in the agonies of death. He was carried to bed in the moſt dreadful

ful convulſions. No perſon attended him but his confeſſor and the ſorrowful old Marquis, in whoſe preſence he expired.—The Marquis died a few weeks after him. Lorenzo's ſecret is concealed in the boſom of the prieſt who received his laſt confeſſion; and no perſon ever learnt what it was.

"Soon after this event, a deep well was cleaned in the farm-yard of the Marquis's villa. It had been diſuſed many years, and the mouth of it was almoſt cloſed up by ſhrubs and old trees. A ſkeleton was found among the rubbiſh. The houſe where this happened is now no more; the family del M—— is extinct, and Antonia's tomb may be ſeen in a convent not far from Salerno."

Aſtoniſhment kept us ſilent.

"You ſee," continued the Sicilian, "how my acquaintance with

the Ruſſian officer, Armenian, or Franciſcan friar has originated. Judge whether I had not cauſe to tremble at the ſight of a being, who has twice placed himſelf in my way in a manner ſo terrible."

"I beg you will anſwer me one queſtion more," ſaid the Prince, riſing from his ſeat;—"Have you been ſincere in your account of the Chevalier?"

"Yes, your Highneſs, to the beſt of my knowledge."—"You really believe him to be an honeſt man?"

"I do, by heaven! I believe him to be an honeſt man?"

"Even at the time that he gave you the ring?"—"How! he gave me no ring. I did not ſay that he gave me the ring."

"Very

"Very well!" ſaid the Prince, pulling the bell, and preparing to depart. "And you believe" (going back to the priſoner) "that the ghoſt of the Marquis de Lanoy, which the Ruſſian officer introduced after your apparition, was a real ghoſt?"

"I cannot think otherwiſe."

"Let us go!" ſaid the Prince, addreſſing himſelf to us. The Jailor came in. "We have done," ſaid the Prince to him. "As for you," turning to the priſoner, "you ſhall hear farther from me."

"I am tempted to aſk your Highneſs the laſt queſtion you propoſed to the Conjurer," ſaid I to the Prince, when we were alone. "Do you believe the ſecond ghoſt to have been a real one?"

" I believe it! No, not now, moſt aſſuredly."

" Not now? Then you did once believe it."

" I confeſs I was tempted for a moment to believe it to have been ſomething more than the contrivance of a juggler; and I could wiſh to ſee the man, who under ſimilar circumſtances would not have formed the ſame ſuppoſition."

" But what reaſon have you for altering your opinion? What the priſoner has related of the Armenian, ought to increaſe rather than diminiſh your belief in his ſupernatural powers."

" What this wretch has related of him!" ſaid the Prince, interrupting me very gravely. " I hope," continued he,

he, " you have not now any doubt that we have had to do with a villain."

" No; but muſt his evidence on that account—"

" The evidence of a villain! Suppoſe I had no other reaſon for doubt, the evidence of ſuch a perſon can be of no weight againſt common ſenſe and eſtabliſhed truth. Does a man who has already deceived me ſeveral times, and whoſe trade it is to deceive, does he deſerve to be heard in a cauſe in which the unſupported teſtimony of even the moſt ſincere adherent to truth could not be received? Ought we to believe a man who perhaps never once ſpoke truth for its own ſake? Does ſuch a man deſerve credit, when he appears as evidence againſt human reaſon and the eternal laws of nature? Would it not be as abſurd as to admit the accuſation

ſation of a perſon notoriouſly infamous againſt unblemiſhed and reproachleſs innocence?"

"But what motives could he have for giving ſo great a character to a man whom he has ſo many reaſons to hate?"

"I am not to conclude that he can have no motives for doing this, becauſe I am unable to comprehend them? Do I know who has bribed him to deceive me? I confeſs I cannot penetrate through the myſtery of this plan; but he has certainly done a material injury to the cauſe he contends for, by ſhewing himſelf at leaſt an impoſtor, and perhaps ſomething worſe."

"The circumſtance of the ring, I allow, appears ſuſpicious."

"It

" It is more than ſuſpicious, it is deciſive. He received this ring from the murderer. Let us even ſuppoſe the circumſtances he has related are true; at the moment he received it, he muſt have been certain that it was from the perpetrator of the murder. Who but the aſſaſſin could have taken from Jeronymo's finger a ring, which he undoubtedly never was without? Throughout the whole of his narration, the Sicilian has laboured to perſuade us, that while he was endeavouring to deceive Lorenzo, Lorenzo was in reality deceiving him. Would he have had recourſe to this ſubterfuge, if he had not been ſenſible that he ſhould loſe much of our confidence, by confeſſing himſelf an accomplice with the aſſaſſin? The whole ſtory is viſibly nothing but a ſeries of impoſtures, invented merely to connect the few truths he has thought proper to give us. Ought I then to heſitate in

diſ-

diſbelieving the eleventh aſſertion of a perſon who has already deceived me ten times, rather than admit a violation of the fundamental laws of nature, which I have ever found in the moſt perfect harmony ?"

" I have nothing to reply to all this; but the apparition we ſaw is to me not the leſs incomprehenſible."

" It is alſo incomprehenſible to me, although I have been tempted to find a key to it."

" How ?"

" Do not you recollect that the ſecond apparition, as ſoon as he entered, walked directly up to the altar, took the crucifix in his hand, and placed himſelf upon the carpet ?"

" It

" It appeared ſo to me."

" And this crucifix, according to the Sicilian's confeſſion, was a conductor. You ſee, that the apparition haſtened to make himſelf electrical. Thus the blow which Lord Seymour ſtruck him with his ſword, muſt of neceſſity be ineffectual, the electric ſtroke having diſabled his arm."

" That is true with reſpect to the ſword. But the piſtol fired by the Sicilian, the ball of which rolled ſlowly upon the altar—"

" Are you convinced that this was the ſame ball which was fired from the piſtol? Not to mention that the puppet, or the man who repreſented the ghoſt, may have been ſo well accoutred as to be invulnerable by ſwords or bullets;

lets; but conſider who had loaded the piſtols."

"True," ſaid I; and a ſudden light darted into my mind. "The Ruſſian officer had loaded them, but it was in our preſence. How could he have deceived us?"

"Why ſhould he not have deceived us? Did you ſuſpect him ſufficiently to obſerve him? Did you examine the ball before it was put into the piſtol? It may have been one of quickſilver or clay. Did you take notice whether the Ruſſian officer really put it into the barrel, or dropped it into his other hand? But ſuppoſing that he actually loaded the piſtols, how can you be ſure that he did not leave them behind him, and take ſome unloaded ones into the room where the ghoſt appeared. He might very eaſily have exchanged them

while

while we were undreſſing. No perſon ever thought of noticing him in particular. It is very poſſible too, that the figure, at the moment when we were prevented from ſeeing it by the ſmoke of the piſtol, might have dropped another ball on the altar. Which of theſe conjectures is impoſſible?"

"Your Highneſs is right. But that ſtriking reſemblance to your deceaſed friend! I have often ſeen him with you, and I immediately recognized him in the apparition."

"I did the ſame, and I muſt confeſs the illuſion was complete; but as the juggler, from a few ſecret glances at the ſnuff-box, was able to give to his apparition ſuch a likeneſs as deceived us both, what was to prevent the Ruſſian officer (who had uſed the box during the whole time of ſupper, who

who had liberty to obſerve the picture unnoticed, and to whom I had diſcovered in confidence the perſon it repreſented) from doing the ſame? Add to this, what has been before obſerved by the Sicilian, that the prominent features of the Marquis were ſo ſtriking as to be eaſily imitated. What now remains to be explained reſpecting the ſecond ghoſt?".

"The words he uttered, the information he gave you about your friend."

"What? Did not the juggler aſſure us, that from the little which he had learnt from me, he had compoſed a ſimilar ſtory? Does not this prove that the invention was obvious and natural? Beſide, the anſwers of the ghoſt, like thoſe of an oracle, were ſo obſcure, that he was in no danger of being detected in a falſehood. If the man who per-

perſonated the ghoſt poſſeſſed ſagacity and preſence of mind, and knew ever ſo little of the affairs on which he was conſulted, to what length might he not have carried the deception?"

"I beg your Highneſs to conſider, how much preparation ſuch a complicated artifice would have required from the Armenian; what a time it requires to paint a face with ſufficient exactneſs; what a time would have been requiſite to inſtruct the pretended ghoſt, ſo as to guard him againſt groſs errors; what a degree of minute attention to regulate every attendant or adventitious circumſtance which might be uſeful or detrimental. And remember, that the Ruſſian officer was abſent but half an hour. Was that ſhort ſpace ſufficient to make even ſuch arrangements as were indiſpenſably neceſſary? Surely not. Even a dramatic writer, who has

nas the leaſt deſire to preſerve the three unities of Ariſtotle, durſt not venture to load the interval between one act and another with ſuch a variety of actions, or to ſuppoſe in his audience ſuch a facility of belief."

"What! You think it abſolutely impoſſible that every neceſſary preparation ſhould have been made in the ſpace of half an hour."

"Indeed, I look upon it as almoſt impoſſible."

"I do not underſtand this expreſſion. Does it militate againſt the laws of time and ſpace, or of matter and motion, that a man ſo ingenious and ſo expert as this Armenian muſt neceſſarily be, aſſiſted by agents whoſe dexterity and acuteneſs are probably not inferior to his own, provided with ſuch means

means and inſtruments as a man of this profeſſion is never without; is it impoſſible that ſuch a man, favoured by ſuch circumſtances, ſhould effect ſo much in ſo ſhort a time? Is it abſurd to ſuppoſe, that by a very ſmall number of words or ſigns, he can convey to his aſſiſtants very extenſive commiſſions, and direct very complex operations? Nothing ought to be admitted againſt the eſtabliſhed laws of nature, unleſs it is ſomething with which theſe laws are abſolutely incompatible. Would you rather give credit to a miracle than admit an improbability? Would you ſolve a difficulty rather by overturning the powers of nature, than by believing an artful and uncommon combination of them?"

"Though the fact will not juſtify a concluſion ſuch as you have condemned, you muſt however grant that it is far beyond our conception."

"I am

"I am almoſt tempted to diſpute even this," ſaid the Prince, with a ſarcaſtic ſmile. "What would you ſay, my dear Count, if it ſhould be proved, for inſtance, that the operations of the Armenian were prepared and carried on not only during the half hour that he was abſent from us, not only in haſte and incidentally, but during the whole evening and the whole night? You recollect that the Sicilian employed near three hours in preparation."

"The Sicilian, your Highneſs!"

"And how will you convince me that this juggler had not as much concern in the ſecond apparition as in the firſt?"

"How!"

"That

" That he was not the principal aſſiſtant of the Armenian—In a word, how will you convince me that they did not co-operate?"

" It would be a difficult taſk to prove that they did," exclaimed I, with no little ſurprize.

" Not ſo difficult, my dear Count, as you imagine. What! could it have happened by mere chance that theſe two men ſhould form a deſign ſo extraordinary and ſo complicated upon the ſame perſon, at the ſame time, and in the ſame place? Could mere chance have produced ſuch an exact harmony between their operations, that one of them ſhould appear as if ſubſervient to the other? Suppoſe the Armenian has intended to heighten the effect of his deception, by

introducing it after a leſs refined one; that he has created a Hector to make himſelf an Achilles. Suppoſe he has done all this, to ſee what degree of credulity he ſhould find in me; to examine the avenues to my confidence; to familiarize himſelf with his ſubject by an attempt that might have miſcarried without any prejudice to his plan; in a word, to try the inſtrument on which he intended to play. Suppoſe he has done this with a view to draw my attention on himſelf, in order to divert it from another object more important to his deſign. Laſtly, ſuppoſe he wiſhes to have imputed to the juggler ſome indirect methods of information which himſelf has had occaſion to practiſe."

"What do you mean?"

"It is poſſible that he may have bribed ſome of my ſervants to give him ſecret

ſecret intelligence, or perhaps ſome papers which may ſerve his purpoſe. One of my domeſtics has abſconded. What reaſon have I to think that the Armenian is not concerned in his leaving me? Such a connection, however, if it exiſts, may be accidentally diſcovered; a letter may be intercepted; a ſervant, who is in the ſecret, may betray his truſt. Now all the conſequence of the Armenian is deſtroyed, if I detect the ſource of his omniſcience; he therefore introduces this juggler, who muſt be ſuppoſed to have the ſame or ſome other deſign upon me. He takes care to give me early notice of him and his intentions, ſo that whatever I may hereafter diſcover, my ſuſpicions muſt neceſſarily reſt upon the Sicilian. This is the puppet with which he amuſes me, whilſt he himſelf, unobſerved and unſuſpected, is entangling me in inviſible ſnares."

"We will allow this. But is it consistent with the Armenian's plan, that he himself should destroy the illusion which he has created, and disclose the mysteries of his science to the eyes of the profane?"

"What mysteries does he disclose? None, surely, which he intends to practise on me; he therefore loses nothing by the discovery. But on the other hand, what an advantage will he gain if this pretended victory over juggling and deception should render me secure and unsuspecting; if he succeeds in diverting my attention from the right quarter (I mean himself,) and in fixing my wavering suspicions on an object most remote from the real one. If at any time, either from my own doubts or at the suggestion of another, I should be tempted to seek in the occult sciences for a key to his mysterious wonders, how

how could he better provide againſt ſuch an enquiry than by contraſting his prodigies with the tricks of the juggler? By confining the latter within artificial limits, and by delivering, as it were, into my hands, a ſcale by which to appreciate them, he naturally exalts and perplexes my ideas of the former. How many ſuſpicions does he preclude by this ſingle contrivance! How many methods of accounting for his miracles, which might afterwards have occurred to me, does he refute beforehand!"

"But in expoſing ſuch a finiſhed deception, he has very much counteracted his own intereſt, both by quickening the penetration of thoſe whom he meant to impoſe upon, and by ſtaggering their belief of miracles in general. If he had had ſuch a plan, your Highneſs's ſelf is the beſt proof of its inſufficiency."

" Perhaps he has been miſtaken in reſpect to myſelf, but his concluſions have nevertheleſs been well founded. Could he foreſee that I ſhould exactly notice the very circumſtance which expoſed the whole artifice? Was it in his plan, that the creature he employed ſhould be ſo communicative? Are we certain that the Sicilian has not far exceeded his commiſſion? He has undoubtedly done ſo with reſpect to the ring, and yet it is chiefly this ſingle circumſtance which determined my diſtruſt in him. A plan whoſe contexture is ſo artful and refined, is eaſily ſpoiled in the execution by an aukward inſtrument. It certainly was not the Armenian's intention that the juggler ſhould ſpeak to us in the ſtyle of a mountebank, that he ſhould endeavour to impoſe upon us ſuch fables as are too groſs to bear the leaſt reflection. For inſtance, with what countenance could

could this impoſtor affirm, that the miraculous being he ſpoke of, renounces all commerce with mankind at twelve in the night? Did not we ſee him among us at that very hour?"

"That is true. He muſt have forgot it."

"People of this deſcription naturally overact their parts, and by exceeding every limit of credibility mar the effects which a well-managed deception is calculated to produce."

"I cannot, however, yet prevail on myſelf to look upon the whole as a mere contrivance of art. What! the Sicilian's terror, his convulſive fits, his ſword, the deplorable ſituation in which we ſaw him, and which was even ſuch as to move our pity; were all theſe nothing more than the mimickry of an actor?

I allow that a ſkilful performer may carry imitation to a very high pitch, but he certainly has no power over the organs of life."

"As for that, my friend, I have ſeen the celebrated Garrick in the character of Richard the Third. But were we at that moment ſufficiently cool to be capable of obſerving diſpaſſionately? Could we judge of the emotions of the Sicilian, when we were almoſt overcome by our own? Beſides, the deciſive criſis, even of a deception, is ſo momentous to the deceiver himſelf, that exceſſive anxiety may produce in him ſymptoms as violent as thoſe which ſurprize excites in the deceived. Add to this, the unexpected entrance of the watch."

"I am glad your Highneſs mentions that. Would the Armenian have ventured

tured to discover such an infamous scheme to the eye of justice, to expose the fidelity of his creature to such a dangerous test? And for what purpose?"

"Leave that matter to him; he is, no doubt, acquainted with the people he employs. Do we know what secret crimes may have secured him the discretion of this man? You have been informed of the office he holds at Venice; what difficulty will he find in saving a man, of whom himself is the only accuser?"

(This suggestion of the Prince was but too well justified by the event. For, some days after, on enquiring about the prisoner, we were told that he had escaped, and had not since been heard of.)

"You ask what could be his motives for delivering this man into the hands

of juſtice?" continued the Prince. "By what other method, except this violent one, could he have wreſted from the Sicilian ſuch an infamous and improbable confeſſion, which, however, was material to the ſucceſs of his plan? Who but a man whoſe caſe is deſperate, and who has nothing to loſe, would conſent to give ſo humiliating an account of himſelf? Under what other circumſtances than ſuch as theſe could we have believed ſuch a confeſſion?"

"I grant your Highneſs all this. The two apparitions were mere contrivances of art: The Sicilian has impoſed upon us a tale which the Armenian his maſter had previouſly taught him: The efforts of both have been directed to the ſame end; and by this mutual intelligence all the wonderful incidents that have aſtoniſhed us in this adventure may be eaſily explained. But the prophecy of the

the ſquare of St. Mark, that firſt miracle, which as it were opened the door to all the reſt, remains ſtill unexplained; and of what uſe is the key to all his other wonders, if we muſt deſpair of reſolving this ſingle one?"

"Rather invert the propoſition, my dear Count, and ſay, what do all theſe wonders prove if I can demonſtrate that a ſingle one among them is a manifeſt deception? The prediction, I allow is above my conception. If it had ſtopped there, if the Armenian had cloſed the ſcene with it, I confeſs, I do not know how far I might have been carried. But in the baſe alloy with which it is mixed, it is certainly ſuſpicious."

"Gracious Sir, I grant it; but it ſtill remains incomprehenſible, and I defy all our philoſophy to explain it."

" But," continued the Prince, " can it be really ſo inexplicable?" After a few moments reflection—" I am far from pretending to the title of a philoſopher, and yet I am almoſt tempted to account for this miracle in a natural way, or at leaſt to deprive it entirely of any extraordinary appearance."

" If your Highneſs can do that," replied I, with a very unbelieving ſmile, " you will be the only wonder in which I have any faith."

" And as a proof," continued he, " how little we are juſtified in flying to ſupernatural powers for an explanation, I will point out to you two different ways by which we may perhaps account for this event, without doing any violence to nature."

" Two ways at once! You do indeed raiſe my expectations."

" You

" You have read, as well as I, the laſt accounts of my late couſin's illneſs. He died of an apoplexy. It was an attack during a fit of the ague. The extraordinarineſs of his death, I confeſs it, induced me to aſk the opinions of ſome phyſicians upon the ſubject, and the knowledge which I acquired from that circumſtance gives me a clue to this enchantment. The diſorder of my deceaſed relative, which was one of a moſt uncommon and alarming nature, had this peculiar ſymptom, that during the fit of the ague it threw the patient into a deep and irrecoverable ſleep, which naturally put an end to his exiſtence on the return of the apoplectic paroxiſm. As theſe paroxiſms return in the moſt regular order, and at an appointed hour, the phyſician is enabled, from the very moment in which he forms his opinion on the nature of the diſorder, to predict the hour of the patient's

patient's deceaſe. The third paroxiſm of a tertian ague will fall to a certainty on the fifth day after the appearance of the illneſs, and that is exactly the length of time neceſſary for the carriage of a letter from ***, where my couſin died, to Venice. Let us ſuppoſe then that our Armenian poſſeſſes a vigilant correſpondent among the attendants of the deceaſed; that he was very much intereſted to gain information from thence; that he had views upon my perſon, to the proſecution of which my belief in the wonderful and the appearance of ſupernatural powers would greatly conduce—thus you have a natural clue to this prediction, which is ſo inconceivable to you. This is ſufficient, for you may hence ſee the poſſibility of a third perſon's informing another of a death which happened at the moment when he announced it, in a place at forty miles diſtance."

" In

" In truth, your Highneſs in this inſtance combines things together, which, taken ſingly, appear very natural, but which could only be brought together by ſomething than is not much better than enchantment."

" What! Do you then fear a wonder leſs than an uncommon plan? As ſoon as we allow that the Armenian is engaged in a plan of conſequence, of which my deſtruction is either the end or at leaſt conducive to it, (and may we not form that opinion of him with which his appearance firſt inſpired us?) nothing will ſeem natural or forced, which could bring his ſcheme to a concluſion in the moſt expeditious manner. But what way could he deviſe more expeditious, than the ſecuring his object by putting on the appearance of a miracle-worker? Who can reſiſt a man, to whom the ſpirits are obedient? However, I grant you that

that my conjectures are not perfectly natural; I confeſs that I am not even myſelf ſatisfied with them. I do not inſiſt upon it, becauſe I do not think it worth my while to call into my aſſiſtance a well formed and deliberate deſign, when it may at laſt turn out to to be a mere accident."

"What!" replied I; "it may be a mere accident?"

"Certainly, nothing more!" continued the Prince. "The Armenian was aware of the danger of my couſin. He met us in the place of St. Mark. The opportunity invited him to hazard a prophecy, which, if it failed, would be nothing more than a looſe word—but if it ſucceeded, might be of the greateſt conſequence. The event was favourable to this attempt—and he might ſtill deſign to make uſe of the gift of prophecy for

for the connection of his plan—Time will diſcloſe this ſecret, or bury it in oblivion. But believe me, friend, (while he laid his hand upon mine, with a very earneſt countenance) a man, to whoſe word the higher powers are obedient, will either not want the aſſiſtance of deception, or at leaſt will deſpiſe it."

"Thus," ſays Count O.... "ended a converſation which I have faithfully related, becauſe it ſhews the difficulties which were to be overcome before the Prince could be effectually impoſed upon. I hope it may free his memory from the imputation of having blindly and inconſiderately thrown himſelf into a ſnare which was ſpread for his deſtruction by the moſt unexampled and diabolical iniquity. Many, at the moment I am writing this, are, perhaps, ſmiling contemptuouſly at the Prince's credulity; but not all thoſe who,

in

in the fancied ſuperiority of their own underſtanding, think themſelves entitled to condemn him; not all thoſe, I apprehend, would have reſiſted this firſt attempt with ſo much firmneſs. If afterwards, notwithſtanding this happy prepoſſeſſion, we witneſs his downfall; if we ſee that the black deſign againſt which, at its very opening, he was thus providentially warned, is finally ſucceſsful, we ſhall not be ſo much inclined to ridicule his weakneſs, as to be aſtoniſhed at the infamous ingenuity of a plot which could ſeduce an underſtanding ſo admirably prepared. Conſiderations of intereſt have no influence in my teſtimony. He, who alone would be thankful for it, is now no more. His dreadful deſtiny is accompliſhed. His ſoul has long ſince been purified before the throne of truth, where mine muſt likewiſe ſhortly appear. Pardon the involuntary tears which now flow at the remembrance

brance of my deceaſed friend—But for the ſake of juſtice I write this hiſtory. He was a great character, and would have adorned a throne which, ſeduced by the moſt atrocious artifice, he attempted to aſcend by the commiſſion of a murder.

" Not long after theſe events," continues the Count d'O.... in his narrative, " I began to obſerve an extraordinary alteration in the diſpoſition of the Prince, which was partly the immediate conſequence of the laſt event, and partly produced by the concurrence of many adventitious circumſtances; for hitherto the Prince had avoided every ſevere trial of his faith, and contented himſelf with purifying the rude and unabſtracted notions of religion in which he had been educated, by thoſe more rational ideas upon this ſubject which obtruded themſelves upon him,

or

or with comparing the discordant opinions with each other, without enquiring into the foundations of his faith. The restraints imposed by religion in general, he has many times confessed to me, always appeared to him like an enchanted castle, into which one does not set one's foot without horror, and that we act a much wiser part if for that reason we pass it with a willing resignation, without exposing ourselves to the danger of being bewildered in its labyrinths; nevertheless, a contrary propensity irresistibly impelled him to those researches which were connected with it. A servile and bigoted education was the source of this dread: this had impressed frightful images upon his tender brain, which he was never able perfectly to obliterate during his whole life. Religious melancholy was an hereditary disorder in his family. The education which

which he and his brothers received was actuated by this principle; the men to whoſe care they were entruſted, ſelected with this view, were alſo either enthuſiaſts or hypocrites.

" To ſtifle all the ſprightlineſs of the boy by a gloomy reſtraint of his mental faculties, was the only method of ſecuring to themſelves the approbation of his noble parents. Such was the dark and gloomy aſpect which the whole of our Prince's childhood wore. Mirth was baniſhed even from his amuſements. All his ideas of religion were accompanied by ſome frightful image, and the repreſentations of terror and ſeverity were thoſe which firſt poſſeſſed themſelves of his lively imagination, and which alſo the longeſt retained their empire over it. His God was an object of terror, a being whoſe ſole occupation is the chaſtiſement of

his

his creatures. The adoration which he paid to him, a blind ſubmiſſion ſtifling all his courage and vigour. In all his infantine or youthful propenſities, which a ſtout body and blooming conſtitution naturally excited to break out with greater violence, religion ſtood in his way; ſhe oppoſed every thing upon which his youthful heart was bent; he learned to conſider her not as a friend, but as the ſcourge of his paſſions; ſo that a ſilent indignation was continually kindled againſt her in his heart, which, together with a revering faith and a blind dread, made both in his heart and head the ſtrangeſt mixture—an abhorrence of the Lord before whom he trembled. It is no wonder, therefore, that he took the firſt opportunity of eſcaping from ſo galling a yoke—but he fled from it as a bond-ſlave from his rigorous maſter, who even in the midſt of freedom drags

drags along with him a ſenſe of his ſervitude; for, as he did not renounce the faith of his earlier years from a deliberate conviction, as he did not wait till the maturity and improvement of his reaſon had weaned him from it, as he had eſcaped from it like a fugitive, upon whoſe perſon the rights of his maſter are ſtill in force, ſo was he obliged, even after his wideſt ſeparation, to return to it at laſt. He had eſcaped with his chain, and for that reaſon muſt neceſſarily become the prey of any one who ſhould diſcover it, and know how to make uſe of the diſcovery. That he did conſider himſelf in ſuch a light, though the reader may not yet have ſuppoſed ſo, the ſequel of this hiſtory will prove.

"The confeſſions of the Sicilian left impreſſed upon his mind more important concluſions than the whole of the circumſtance deſerved; and the ſmall victory

victory which his reaſon had thence gained over this weak impoſture, remarkably increaſed his reliance upon it. The facility with which he had been able to unravel this deception, appeared to have perfectly overwhelmed him. Truth and error were not yet ſo accurately diſtinguiſhed from each other in his mind, but that he often happened to miſtake the arguments which were in favour of the one for thoſe which were in favour of the other. Thence it aroſe, that the ſame blow which urged his faith to credulity, made the whole edifice of it totter. In this inſtance he fell into the ſame error as an unexperienced man who has been deceived in love or friendſhip becauſe he made a bad choice, and who drops all credit in theſe ſenſations, becauſe he takes mere incidental circumſtances for their actual diſtinguiſhing features. The unmaſking

maſking of a deception made even truth ſuſpicious to him, becauſe he had unfortunately diſcovered the truth on very weak grounds.

"This imaginary triumph pleaſed him in proportion to the magnitude of the oppreſſion from which it ſeemed to have delivered him. From this inſtant there aroſe in his mind a ſcepticiſm which did not ſpare even the moſt venerable objects.

"Many circumſtances concurred to encourage him in this turn of mind, and ſtill more to confirm him in it.

"He now quitted the retirement in which he had hitherto lived, and was obliged to give way to a more diſſipated mode of life. His rank was diſcovered. Attentions which he was obliged to return, etiquettes for which

he was indebted to his rank, drew him imperceptibly within the vortex of the great world. His rank, as well as his perſonal attractions, opened to him the circles of all the *beaux eſprits* in Venice, and he ſoon found himſelf on terms of intimacy with the moſt enlightened perſons in the republic, the men of learning as well as politicians. This obliged him to enlarge the uniform and narrow circle to which his underſtanding had hitherto been confined. He began to perceive the poverty and debility of his ideas, and to feel the want of more elevated impreſſions. The old-faſhioned dreſs of his underſtanding, ſpite of the many advantages with which it was accompanied, formed an unpleaſing contraſt with the current ideas of ſociety; his ignorance of the commoneſt things frequently expoſed him to ridicule, and nothing did he dread ſo much as that. The unfortunate prejudice which attached

tached to his native country, appeared to him a challenge to overcome it in his own perſon. Thence aroſe a peculiarity in his character; he was offended with every attention that he thought he owed to his rank, and not to his natural good qualities. He felt this humiliation principally in the company of perſons who ſhone by their abilities, and triumphed, as it were, over their birth by their merit. To perceive himſelf diſtinguiſhed as a prince in ſuch a ſociety, was always a baſe humiliation to him, becauſe he unfortunately conceived that by that title he was totally excluded from all competition. All theſe circumſtances together convinced him of the neceſſity for the formation of his mind, which he had hitherto neglected, in order to raiſe it to a level with the thinking part of the world, from which he had remained ſo far remote; and for that pur-

poſe he choſe the moſt faſhionable books, to which he now applied himſelf with all the ardour with which he was accuſtomed to purſue every object he pitched upon. But the unſkilful hand that directed his choice always prompted him to ſelect ſuch as were little calculated for the improvement either of his heart or his reaſon. And even in this inſtance, he was influenced by that propenſity which rendered the charms of every thing incomprehenſible and irreſiſtible. He had neither attention nor memory for any thing that was not connected with this: his reaſon and his heart remained empty, while he was filling the vacuities in his brain with confuſed ideas.

The dazzling ſtile of the one captivated his imagination, while the ſubtlety of the other enſnared his reaſon.

They

They were both able eaſily to poſſeſs themſelves of a mind which became the prey of any one who obtruded himſelf upon it with a good aſſurance. A courſe of reading, which had been continued with ardour for more than a year, had ſcarcely enriched him with one benevolent idea; but filled his head with doubts, which, as a natural conſequence with ſuch a character, had almoſt found an unfortunate road to his heart. In a word, he had entered this labyrinth as a credulous enthuſiaſt, had left it as a ſceptic, and was at length become a perfect free-thinker.

Among the many circles into which they had introduced him, there was a private ſociety called the Bucentauro, which, under the external ſhow of a noble and rational liberality of ſentiment, encouraged the moſt unbridled licentiouſneſs of manners and

opinions. As they enumerated many of the clergy among their members, and could even boaſt of ſome cardinals at their head, the Prince was the more eaſily induced to be admitted into it.

He thought that certain dangerous truths, which reaſon diſcovers, could be no where better preſerved than in the hands of ſuch perſons, whoſe rank confined them to moderation, and who had had the advantage of hearing and examing the other ſide of the queſtion.

The Prince did not recollect that licentiouſneſs of ſentiment and manners takes ſo much the ſtronger hold among perſons of this rank, inaſmuch as they for that reaſon feel one curb leſs; and this was the caſe with the Bucentauro; moſt of whoſe members, through an execrable philoſophy, and manners worthy of ſuch a guide, were not only a

diſgrace

diſgrace to their own rank, but even to human nature itſelf. The ſociety had its ſecret degrees; and I will believe, for the credit of the Prince, that they never thought him worthy of admiſſion into the inmoſt ſanctuary. Every one who entered this ſociety was obliged, at leaſt ſo long as he continued to be a member of it, to lay aſide all diſtinctions ariſing from rank, nation, or religion; in ſhort, every general mark or diſtinction whatever, and to ſubmit himſelf to the condition of univerſal equality. To be elected a member was indeed a difficult matter, as ſuperiority of underſtanding alone paved the way to it. The ſociety boaſted of the higheſt ton and the moſt cultivated taſte, and ſuch indeed was its fame throughout all Venice. This, as well as the appearance of equality which predominated in it, attracted the Prince irreſiſtibly. Senſible converſa-

tions, ſet off by the moſt admirable humour, inſtructive amuſements, and the flower of the learned and political world, which were all attracted to this point as to their common centre, concealed from him for a long time the danger of this connection. Though he had by degrees diſcovered, through its maſk, the ſpirit of the inſtitution, as they were tired of being any longer on their guard before him, to recede was dangerous, and falſe ſhame and anxiety for his ſafety obliged him to conceal the diſpleaſure which he felt. But he already began, merely from familiarity with men of this claſs and their ſentiments, though they did not excite him to imitation, to loſe the pure and charming ſimplicity of his character, and the delicacy of his moral feelings. His underſtanding, ſo little ſupported by any real knowledge, could not, without foreign aſſiſtance, ſolve the fallacious

cious ſophiſms with which he had been here enſnared; and this fatal corroder had conſumed all, or nearly all, on which his morality reſted. He gave away the natural and neceſſary ſupports of his happineſs for ſophiſms which deſerted him at a critical moment, and conſequently obliged him to abide by the beſt deciſion which ſhould firſt offer itſelf.

Perhaps it was yet left to the hand of a friend to extricate him at a proper opportunity from this abyſs; but, beſides that I did not become acquainted with the interior of the Budentauro till long after the evil had taken place, an urgent circumſtance called me away from Venice juſt at the beginning of this period. Moreover, Lord Seymour, a valuable acquaintance of the Prince's, whoſe underſtanding was proof againſt every ſpecies of

 deception,

deception, and who would have infallibly been a ſecure ſupport to him, left us at this time in order to return to his native country. Thoſe in whoſe hands I left the Prince were very worthy men, but inexperienced, exceſſively narrow in their religious opinions, and as much deficient in inſight into the evil as in credit with the Prince. They had nothing to oppoſe to his captious ſophiſms, except the maxims of a blind and unenquiring faith, which either irritated him or excited his ridicule. He ſaw through them too eaſily, and his ſuperior reaſon ſoon ſilenced thoſe weak defenders of the good cauſe, which will be clearly evinced from an inſtance that I ſhall introduce in the ſequel. The others, who, ſubſequent to this, poſſeſſed themſelves of his confidence, were much more occupied in plunging him deeper into it. When I returned to Venice

in

in the following year, a change had taken place in every thing.

The influence of this new philoſophy ſoon ſhewed itſelf in the Prince's conduct. The more he openly purſued pleaſure, and formed new friendſhips, the more did he deſert his old ones. He pleaſed me leſs and leſs every day; we ſaw each other ſeldom, and indeed he was ſeldom to be found. He had launched out into the torrent of the great world. His threſhold was never clear when he was at home. One amuſement introduced another, one banquet another, and one pleaſure was ſucceeded by a ſecond. He was the beauty whom every one adored—the king and idol of every circle. As often as he reflected on the former quietneſs of his retired life, amidſt the buſtle of the world, ſo often did he find more reaſon for aſtoniſhment. Every thing met

his wiſhes. Whatever he uttered was admirable, and when he remained ſilent it was committing a robbery upon the company. They underſtood the art of almoſt baniſhing reflection from his ſoul by an agreeable thoughtleſsneſs, and through a delicate aſſiſtance to overwhelm him with it.

This happineſs, which accompanied him every where, and this univerſal ſucceſs, raiſed him indeed too much in his own ideas, becauſe it gave him reliance upon and confidence in himſelf.

The high opinion which he thence acquired of his own worth, made him credit the exceſſive and almoſt idolatrous adoration that was paid to his underſtanding; which, without this augmented and ſomewhat juſt ſelf-complacency, muſt have neceſſarily recalled him to his ſenſes. For the preſent, however,

however, this univerſal voice was only the confirmation of that which his complacent vanity whiſpered to him in private—a tribute which he was entitled to by right. He would have infallibly diſengaged himſelf from this ſnare, had they allowed him to take breath—had they granted him a moment of uninterrupted leiſure for comparing his real merit with the picture that was exhibited to him in this ſeducing mirror; but his exiſtence was a continued ſtate of intoxication, of a ſtaggering dizzineſs. The higher he had been elevated, the more difficulty had he to ſupport himſelf in his elevation. This inceſſant exertion ſlowly undermined him—reſt had forſaken even his ſlumbers. They had diſcovered his weakneſs, and turned to good account the paſſion which they had kindled in his breaſt.

His

His worthy attendants ſoon ſuffered for the *ſpirit* of their lord. That anxious ſenſibility, thoſe glorious truths which his heart once embraced with the greateſt enthuſiaſm, now began to be the objects of his ridicule. He revenged himſelf on the great truths of religion for the oppreſſion which he had ſo long ſuffered from miſconception. But, ſince from too true a voice his heart combated the intoxication of his head, there was more of acrimony than of humour in his jokes. His diſpoſition began to alter, and caprice to make its appearance. The moſt beautiful ornament of his character, his moderation, vaniſhed—paraſites had poiſoned his excellent heart. That tender delicacy of addreſs which frequently made his attendants forget that he was their lord, was now obliged not ſeldom to give place to a deciſive and deſpotic tone, that made the more ſenſible impreſſion,

impreſſion, becauſe it was not founded upon the external diſtinction of birth, for the want of which they could have more eaſily conſoled themſelves, and which he himſelf eſteemed leſs; but upon an injurious eſtimation of his own individual merit; ſince, when at home, he was attacked by reflections that ſeldom made their appearance in the buſtle of company; his own people ſeldom beheld him otherwiſe than gloomy, peeviſh, and unhappy, whilſt a forced vivacity made him the ſoul of every circle. With the ſincereſt ſorrow did we behold him treading this dangerous path. In the tumult in which he was involved, the feeble voice of friendſhip was no longer heard, and he was yet too much intoxicated to underſtand it.

Juſt at the beginning of this epoch an affair of the greateſt conſequence required

required my preſence in the court of my ſovereign, and which I dared not poſtpone even for the deareſt intereſts of friendſhip. An inviſible hand, which I did not diſcover till long after that period, had contrived to derange my affairs there, and to ſpread reports which I was obliged to haſten to contradict by my preſence. My abſence from the Prince was as painful to me as it was pleaſing to him. The ties which united us had now been ſevered for ſome time; but his fate had awakened all my anxiety: I on that account made the Baron de F... promiſe to inform me in his letters of every event, which he has done in the moſt conſcientious manner. As I was now for a conſiderable time no longer an eye-witneſs of theſe events, it will be allowable for me to introduce the Baron de F... in my ſtead, and to fill up the gap in my narrative by the contents

tents of his letters, notwithſtanding that the repreſentation of my friend F... is not always that which I ſhould have given. I would not, however, alter any of his expreſſions, by which the reader will be enabled to diſcover the truth with very little trouble.

LETTER

LETTER I.

BARON F... TO THE COUNT O...

I THANK you, my beloved friend, that you have given me permiſſion to continue with you, even in your abſence, the converſation of friendſhip, which, during your ſtay here was my greateſt pleaſure. There is not any perſon here with whom I could venture to converſe, as you are well aware, on account of private tranſactions; and, independent of that, I deſpiſe the character of the people. Since the Prince became a member of their ſociety, and from the moment that you were torn from

from us, I have been friendleſs in the midſt of this populous city.

Z... takes it in an eaſier manner; for, encircled by the fair ones at Venice, he learns to forget the ſorrows which he is obliged to ſhare with me when at home. And why ſhould he perplex himſelf? He deſires nothing from the Prince but that which a maſter would beſtow; but I, you know, place him nearer to my heart, and think I can never be too ſolicitous about his welfare and happineſs; and, indeed, I have reaſon for it. I have now lived with him ſixteen years, and exiſt only for him. At the age of nine years I entered into his ſervice, and ſince that time I have never been ſeparated from him. I have grown up under his patronage, ſhared with him his pleaſures and misfortunes, and time has converted reſpect into a ſincere attachment. Until now

I looked

I looked upon him as my friend and brother; we baſked in the ſun-beam of happineſs, uninterrupted by the clouds of miſery.

Since you have left us, conſiderable alterations have taken place. The Prince . . de . . . arrived here laſt week with a great retinue, and has corrupted our circle of acquaintance with ideas of a tumultuous life. As he and our Prince are ſo nearly related, and live at preſent upon good terms, I ſuſpect they will not ſeparate from one another during his ſtay here, which will laſt, as I have heard, till the Aſcenſion. His debut has already attracted notice; and for ten days the Prince has been in the midſt of gaiety. The ſtile in which the Prince . . . de . . . has begun his career may be juſtified upon the ground that his ſtay here will not be long; but the firſt part of the buſineſs is, that he has

has induced our Prince to partake of thoſe inſidious pleaſures, knowing that he could not eaſily deny him his requeſt, on account of the peculiar connection which exiſts between their houſes; added to this, in a few weeks we muſt depart from Venice, when he will be obliged to abandon this extraordinary and inſufferable mockery of happineſs, and which, perhaps, may make a ſerious impreſſion on his mind.

The Prince ... de ..., it is reported, is here on the buſineſs of the order of .... That he has taken advantage of all the acquaintances of our Prince you may eaſily imagine. He was received into the Bucentauro with great ſplendor, and pleaſed himſelf with the idea that he was characterized as a wit, and one of great ſpirit; and he has called himſelf in his correſpondences (which he maintains in all parts of the world) the

the *philoſophical Prince.* I know not whether you have ever had the fortune to ſee him perſonally. He diſplays a promiſing exterior, piercing eyes, and a countenance full of expreſſion. Polite, and unaffected, he entertains (pardon me this expreſſion) a princely reſpect for the feelings of his inferiors, but at the ſame time puts great confidence in himſelf. Who could refuſe to pay adoration to ſo princely a character? and how ſuch a ſolitary Prince as ours will appear in oppoſition to ſuch dazzling accompliſhments, time itſelf muſt diſcover.

In the arrangement of our affairs, many and great changes have taken place. We poſſeſs a new and magnificent houſe oppoſite the new Procuracy, becauſe the lodgings at the Moor Hotel were too ſmall for the Prince.

Our

Our houſehold has been augmented by twelve perſons. Pages, moors, body-guards, &c. grace our retinue. You complained during your ſtay here of extravagance; you ſhould be here now to witneſs the preſent ſyſtem.

Our internal arrangements are ſtill the ſame; only that the Prince, who no longer reſpects the advice of thoſe he once loved, is become more reſerved and cold towards us, and that we very ſeldom ſee him or are in his company, except in the hours employed in dreſſing and undreſſing him. Under the pretext that we ſpeak the French language very bad, and the Italian not at all, he excludes us from his preſence, which would not affect me in any great degree, but that I believe, to ſpeak the truth, he is aſhamed of us; and that circumſtance diſpleaſes me, be-

cauſe

cauſe I am confident we have not deſerved ſuch treatment.

Of all our people (as you wiſh to know the minutiæ) he ſeems moſt attached to Biondello, whom he took into his ſervice, as you muſt remember, when he could not diſcover the retreat of his former ſervant from Bremen, and who has become, by this new manner of life, quite a neceſſary being. This man knows how every thing is going on at Venice, and he employs his time to ſome purpoſe. He is as if he had a thouſand eyes and a thouſand hands to ſet in motion at once. He contrives all plans, and gains the greater part of his knowledge, as he ſays, by the help of the gondoliers; for that reaſon, he has become a great acquiſition to the Prince. He makes him acquainted with every new face whom the Prince has met in his ſocieties;

ties; and the ſecret information which he gives his Highneſs has always been found correct. Beſide this, he reads and writes the Italian and French in an excellent ſtyle, by which means he has already become the Prince's ſecretary. I muſt relate to you a trait of fidelity in him, which is indeed very rare to be found in men of his ſtation. Not long ago a merchant of great conſequence from Rimini begged to be admitted to the Prince. The matter concerned a particular complaint againſt Biondello. The Procurator, his former maſter, who muſt have been an odd fellow, had for ſome time lived upon bad terms with his relations. Biondello poſſeſſed his confidence, and to him he entruſted all his ſecrets. As he was upon his death-bed, he made him ſwear never to diſcloſe them to any one, that his relations might not be benefited by

them, and gave him, as a reward, a great legacy.

When the will was opened, and his papers inſpected, there were found conſiderable numbers of blanks, to which Biondello alone could furniſh the key. He denied that he knew any thing of the matter, gave up to the relations his legacy, and perſevered in his fidelity to the injunctions of his deceaſed maſter. Great offers were made to him by the relations, but all to no purpoſe; at laſt he eluded their threats of forcing him to confeſſion, by entering into the ſervice of the Prince.

This merchant, who was the heir at law, addreſſed himſelf to the Prince, and made ſtill greater offers to Biondello if he would diſcover the ſecret—but it was all in vain. The Prince interfered, but he remained firm. He confeſſed however to his Highneſs, that

ſecrets

ſecrets of great importance were confided to him, and he did not deny that the deceaſed might have acted with too much ſeverity towards his relations; but he added, "he was my good maſter and benefactor, and with the firmeſt confidence in my ſincerity he died. I was the only friend he left in the world—as ſuch I will never betray my truſt, nor act in contradiction to his dying requeſt." In the mean time he gave a hint, that a diſcovery would not add to the honour of his deceaſed maſter. Was not ſuch conduct worthy to be imitated? You may eaſily imagine that the Prince did not inſiſt upon his violating his vow of fidelity. This extraordinary attachment which he ſhewed for the deceaſed, gained him the moſt unlimited confidence of his royal maſter.

Happineſs attend you, my dear friend. I look back upon our former manner of life with ſecret pleaſure, to which you have contributed in a high degree. I fear we ſhall never more enjoy thoſe tranquil hours at Venice which we were wont formerly to do, and am much miſtaken if the Prince is not of the ſame way of thinking. The element in which he lives at preſent is not that in which he can be happy in future, or an experience of ſixteen years deceives me. Farewel!

LETTER

LETTER II.

BARON F... TO THE COUNT O...

MAY 18.

I HAD no idea that our ſtay at Venice would prove ſo ſatisfactory as it has done. He has ſaved the life of a man—I am reconciled to him.

The Prince not long ago ſuffered himſelf to be carried home in a chair from the Bicentauro; and two footmen, with Biondello, conducted him. I know not how it happened, but the chair, which had been hired in haſte, broke, and the Prince was obliged to walk on

foot the remainder of the way. Biondello went before. The way lay through ſeveral dark ſtreets; and as it was not far from day-break, ſome of the lamps burnt but faintly, while the others were totally extinguiſhed. They had been walking a quarter of an hour, when Biondello diſcovered that he had taken the wrong road. The ſimilarity of the bridges had deceived him, and inſtead of croſſing that of St. Mark, they found themſelves in *Seſtiere* of *Raffello*. It was in one of the bye ſtreets, and not a ſoul ſtirring near the ſpot. They were obliged to turn back to gain, as the beſt way, one of the principal ſtreets. They had walked but a few ſteps, when in an adjoining ſtreet they diſtinctly heard the cry of "Murder!" The Prince, unarmed as he was, ſnatched from one of the ſervants a ſtick, and with his uſual courage, which you have often witneſſed,

neſſed, ran towards the place whence the voice iſſued. Three ruffianlike fellows were juſt on the point of vanquiſhing a perſon, who, with his ſervant, was defending himſelf, apparently overcome by fatigue, when the Prince appeared, and prevented the villains from murdering him. His voice, and that of his ſervants, ſtartled the murderers, who did not expect in ſuch a diſmal place to meet with any interruption.

They immediately left their man, after ſeveral ſlight ſtabs with their daggers, and took flight. Fainting with loſs of blood, the wounded man ſunk into the arms of the Prince: his conductors then told him, that he had ſaved the life of the Marquis of Civitella, the nephew of the Cardinal A. . . i. As the Marquis's wounds bled very much, Biondello performed as well as he was

able the office of ſurgeon, and the Prince immediately ſaw him taken to the palace of his uncle, which was not far diſtant from the ſpot. This done, he left the houſe, without diſcovering his rank. But through the means of a footman, who was acquainted with Biondello, he was betrayed. The following morning the Cardinal appeared, an old acquaintance from the Bucentauro. The viſit laſted an hour; the Cardinal was in great emotion, and when they ſeparated tears ſtood in his eyes; the Prince alſo appeared extremely concerned. The ſame evening his Highneſs paid a viſit to the wounded man, whom the Surgeon affirmed would ſoon recover. The cloak in which he was wrapped up had in ſome meaſure ſhielded him from the force with which the ſtabs were given.—Since that accident, not a day has paſſed over without the Prince paying a viſit to the Cardinal, or re-

receiving one from him; and a great friendſhip begins to exiſt between him and that family.

The Cardinal is a venerable man of ſixty, with a majeſtic appearance, but full of gaiety and good health. They think him one of the richeſt prelates in the whole Republic. Of his enormous fortune he himſelf is the treaſurer, and, although a prudent œconomiſt, he does not deſpiſe the pleaſures of the world. This nephew, who is his only heir, does not always poſſeſs the good opinion of his uncle. Although the old man is not an enemy to youthful pleaſures, the conduct of the nephew appears to exhauſt every principle of tolerance in his relation. His diſſipated principles, and his licentious manner of living, ſupported by every vice that is countenanced by the groſſeſt ſenſuality, make him the terror of all fathers, and the curſe of

domeſtic happineſs. This laſt attack, it is ſaid, was owing to an intrigue which he had concerted with the wife of the **** ambaſſador: not to mention other troubles, from which only the power and money of the Cardinal could extricate him. But for this the Cardinal might be the moſt enviable man in all Italy, becauſe he poſſeſſes every thing that can make life worth preſerving. But his nephew's enormities render the gifts of fortune ſuperfluous; and the continual fear of not being able to find an heir worthy of his property, diminiſhes the comfort that his Eminence would otherwiſe enjoy in ſuch a ſtate of affluence.

I have this information from Biondello. In this man the Prince has acquired a treaſure. Every day he makes himſelf more worthy of eſtimation, and we almoſt hourly diſcover in him ſome new

new talent. Not long ago the Prince, being over-fatigued, could not ſleep. The night-lamp was extinguiſhed, and no bell could waken the valet de chambre, who it was ſoon found was gone to ſleep out of the houſe with an opera girl. The Prince had the reſolution to get up himſelf, to call one of his people. He had not gone far, when he heard at a little diſtance from him enchanting muſic. He followed the ſound, and found Biondello playing upon the flute in his room, with his fellow-ſervants round him. He commanded him to proceed. With admirable ſkill Biondello repeated the ſame air, with the moſt delightful variations and niceties of a virtuoſo. The Prince, who is a connoiſſeur in muſic, declared, that he might play with great confidence in the beſt concert.

"I muſt diſmiſs this man," ſaid he to me the following morning; "I am unable to recompence him according to his merits."

Biondello, who heard theſe words, came towards him.

"Gracious Sir, if you do that, you deprive me of my beſt reward."

"You are worthy of ſomething better than being a ſervant," ſaid my maſter. "I will not any longer be a bar to the improvement of your fortune."

"Do not preſs upon me any other fortune, gracious Sir, than that which I have choſen myſelf."

"And to neglect ſuch a talent—No! I muſt not conſent."

"Then

" Then permit me, your Highneſs, to exerciſe it every now and then in your preſence."

To this propoſition the Prince immediately conſented, and Biondello obtained an apartment adjoining the ſleeping-room of his maſter, where he lulled him to repoſe by ſoft and delicate airs, and awoke him in the morning with the ſame melody. The Prince inſiſted upon increaſing his ſalary, which he did not accept without requeſting his Highneſs to permit him to let it lie in his hands, as a capital which perhaps at ſome future period might be of ſervice to him. The Prince expected that he would ſoon apply for his money, or ſome other favour; and whatever it might have been the Prince would not have denied it. Farewell, my beſt of friends. I expect with impatience news from R***n.

LETTER

LETTER III.

THE BARON F... TO THE COUNT O...

JUNE 4.

THE Marquis Civitella, who is now entirely recovered from his wounds, was introduced laſt week by the Cardinal his uncle to the Prince, and ſince that day he has followed him like his ſhadow. Biondello, I ſuſpect, has not told me the truth concerning the character of the Marquis, at leaſt he is gone too far in his deſcription.

He is to all appearance a moſt amiable man, and irreſiſtible in company. It is

not

not poſſible to be angry with him; the firſt ſight of him has conquered all my prejudices. Figure to your mind a man of the moſt enchanting perſon, a face full of uncommon expreſſion, an inſinuating tone of voice, poſſeſſed of the moſt fluent eloquence, united with all the advantages of the beſt education. He has none of that low deſpicable pride which in general ſo much diſgraces the nobility here.

Every action teems with the energy of youth, benevolence, and warm ſenſibility. They muſt, in relating his extravagances, have gone far beyond the truth; I never ſaw a more perfect contraſt than his conduct is to that which is repreſented of him. If he be really ſo licentious as Biondello aſſerted, then he is a Siren, whom no creature is able to reſiſt.

Towards

Towards me he acted with unreſerved confidence. He confeſſed to me with the moſt agreeable frankneſs, that he did not ſtand in high favour with his uncle the Cardinal, and perhaps he might have deſerved his cenſure. But he was ſeriouſly reſolved to amend his life; and he declared the merit of his reformation would entirely fall to the Prince: In the meantime he hoped, through his interference, to be entirely reconciled with his uncle, becauſe he had the higheſt confidence of the Prince's character. He had wanted till now a friend and inſtructor, and he hoped to acquire both in the perſon of the Prince.

The Prince exerciſes all the authority of a tutor over him, and guides him with the paternal watchfulneſs and ſolicitude of a Mentor. This confidence alſo gives him certain advantages, and

he

he knows perfectly well how to make them valuable. He ſeldom quits the preſence of the Prince, he partakes of all his pleaſures, and has lately become one of the Bucentauro; and that is lucky for him,—he was before too young. Wherever he goes with the Prince, he charms the ſociety by his accompliſhments, which he is well ſkilled in turning to the greateſt advantage. Nobody, they ſay, ever could ſucceed in reclaiming him; and ſhould the Prince accompliſh this Herculean labour, he will deſerve the higheſt encomiums for his conduct. But I fear very much the tide will turn, and Mentor become the pupil of his ſcholar; to this end all the preſent circumſtances ſeem to lead.

The Prince ** d** is departed, and indeed to the greateſt ſatisfaction of all here, my maſter not excepted. What

what I foretold, dear O...., is thus happily accompliſhed. Two ſuch oppoſite characters could not long, I was confident, maintain a good underſtanding with each other. The Prince ..d.. was not long at Venice before I obſerved a ſchiſm in their friendſhip; from which circumſtance the Prince was in danger of loſing all his former admirers. Wherever he went, he found this rival in his way, who poſſeſſed the artful quality of turning every advantage in which our Prince was deficient to good account. He had a variety of little manœuvres at his command, which our maſter, from a noble ſenſibility, diſdained. From ſuch circumſtances, in a ſhort time, he procured a number of friends of his own deſcription to follow his advice and participate in his ſchemes*. It would have

* In the unfavourable opinion which the Baron F...., forms of our Prince, in ſeveral parts of the firſt letter, every one who has the happineſs to know

have been better for the Prince if he had not conſidered him as an enemy; but had looked forward to the time when this would have been the caſe. But now he has advanced too far into the ſtream, to reach the ſhore without difficulty. Although theſe trifles, by habit, have acquired an aſcendancy over him, and probably he may deſpiſe them in his heart; yet his pride will not permit him to renounce them; naturally ſuppoſing that his ſubmiſſion will appear like conviction, rather than a free diſpoſition to confeſs his abhorrence of them. The ſatirical manner in which they always converſed, and the ſpirit of rivalſhip that influenced his opponent, have alſo ſeized upon him. And to preſerve his conqueſts, and to maintain himſelf upon the dangerous principles to which the

know him intimately, will think with me, that he went beyond the limits of his judgment, and will aſcribe it to the prejudice of this young obſerver.

opinion

opinion of the world had riveted him, he is believed to augment the allurements of faſhion and gaiety, and this cannot be acquired but by ſplendour equal to his rank; on that account he has been involved in perpetual banquets, concerts, and gaming. And this ſtrange madneſs diffuſed itſelf through their houſholds, although they are in general more watchful of the principle of honour, than their maſters; he is therefore obliged to gain the favour of his people by liberality. A long chain of poverty is the unavoidable conſequence of this unhappy connection.

We have got rid at laſt of the rival; but what he has ſubverted cannot ſo eaſily be reſtored. The treaſure of the Prince is exhauſted; all that he had ſaved by a ſtrict œconomy is gone; we muſt haſten from Venice, or elſe be involved in debt, which, till now, he has carefully

carefully avoided. Our departure is certainly to take place as ſoon as freſh remittances arrive.

The many unneceſſary expences he has incurred would be of little conſequence if his happineſs increaſed in proportion; but he was never leſs happy than at preſent! He feels that he is not now what he formerly was—he is diſſatisfied with himſelf, and ruſhes into new diſſipation, to avoid the piercing conſequences of reflection. One new acquaintance follows another, which is fatal to his reformation. I know not what may happen, but we muſt depart—We have no other ſafety—But, dear friend, as yet I have not received a ſingle line from you—how muſt I interpret this long ſilence?

LETTER

LETTER IV.

THE BARON F... TO THE COUNT D'O...

JUNE 12.

RECEIVE my thanks, dear friend, for that token of your remembrance which young B...hl brought over to me. But what do you ſay about letters which I was to have received? I have not received any letters from you till now; not even a line. What a circuit muſt thoſe which I now receive have taken! For the future, dear O... when you honour me with your letters, ſend them by Trient, and under cover to my maſter.

We

We have at length been obliged, my dear friend, to take that ſtep which we had hitherto ſo fortunately avoided. The notes were kept back, even at this preſſing emergency—for the firſt time were they kept back; we were abſolutely compelled to have recourſe to a uſurer, and the Prince willingly pays ſomething more for the ſake of ſecreſy. The worſt of theſe unpleaſant circumſtances is, that it delays our departure.

Such was the ſtate of our affairs when the Prince and I came to an explanation. The whole of the buſineſs had paſſed through Biondello's hands, and the Jew was preſent before I had the leaſt ſuſpicion of it.

I was grieved to the heart to ſee the Prince reduced to ſuch an extremity, and it revived in me all the recollection

of

of the paſt, and all my fears for the future; ſo that I certainly might have looked a little melancholy and gloomy when the uſurer left the room. The Prince, to whom the preceding ſcene had doubtleſs been by no means pleaſing, walked backwards and forwards with uneaſineſs. The rouleaus of gold were yet lying on the table—I was ſtanding at the window, and employing myſelf in counting the windows in the *Procuratié*—there was a long ſilence. At length he addreſſed himſelf to me—

"F.." he began, "I cannot bear any diſmal faces about me."

I was ſilent.

"Why do you not anſwer me?—Do I not ſee that it will break your heart not to pour forth your vexation? I command you to ſpeak. You may, perhaps,

perhaps, wonder what extraordinary affairs I am concealing from you."

"If I am gloomy, gracious Sir," replied I, "it is only becauſe I do not ſee you in better ſpirits."

"I know," continued he, "that you think I have acted wrongly for ſome time paſt—that every ſtep which I have taken has diſpleaſed you—that—What does the Count d'O... ſay in his letters?"

"The Count d'O... has not written to me."

"Not written? Why will you not confeſs the truth? You mutually lay open your hearts to each other—you and the Count. I know it very well: however, you need not conceal it from

me. I ſhall not introduce myſelf into your ſecrets."

"The Count d'O..." replied I, "has only anſwered the firſt of three letters which I wrote to him."

"I was wrong," continued he; "is it not ſo? (taking up one of the rouleaus) I ſhould not have acted thus."

"I ſee very plainly that the ſtep was *neceſſary*."

"I ought not to have involved myſelf in ſuch a neceſſity."

I remained ſilent.

"Indeed, I ought not to have ventured beyond that point in the completion of my wiſhes, ſo as to have become a grey-

greybeard as ſoon as I became a man. Becauſe I once ſtep forth from the dreary uniformity of my former life, and look around me to ſee whether there will ſpring up no ſource of enjoyment for me in any other quarter; becauſe I—"

"If it were only a trial, gracious Sir, I have nothing more to ſay; for the experience which it has procured for you would not be purchaſed at too dear a rate, though it coſt three times as much. It hurts me, I muſt confeſs, that the opinion of the world ſhould have to decide upon the queſtion, How you can be happy?"

"Fortunate man, who can thus deſpiſe the opinion of the world! I am its creature, and muſt be its ſlave. What elſe are we governed by, but opinion? Opinion is every thing with

us

us princes. Opinion is our nurſe and educatreſs in infancy, our legiſlatreſs and miſtreſs in our manly years, and our crutch in old age. Take from us what we receive from opinion, and the meaneſt of the humbleſt claſs is better off than we are; for his fate has taught him a philoſophy which enables him to bear it. A prince who laughs at opinion, is his own deſtroyer, like the prieſt who denies the exiſtence of a god."

"And yet, gracious Prince—"

"I know what you are going to ſay. I can paſs the boundary of the circle which my birth has drawn around me.—But can I eradicate from my memory all the fooliſh ideas which education and early habit have planted in it, and which a hundred thouſand of you fools have ever been impreſſing with

with more and more firmneſs? Every one wiſhes to be what he is to *perfection*, and our exiſtence conſiſts, in ſhort, in *appearing happy*. If we cannot be ſo according to your mode, ſhall we not for that reaſon be ſo at all? If we can no longer taſte of joy immediately from its uncorrupted ſource, ſhall we not deceive ourſelves with an artificial enjoyment, ſhall we not ſnatch a ſmall compenſation even from the very hand which robs us?"

"You once found theſe joys in your own heart."

"But if I do not any longer find them there!—Oh, how came we to fall upon this ſubject? Why muſt you awake in me the recollection of that, even if I have had recourſe to this tumult of voluptuouſneſs, in order to ſtifle a voice which renders my life miſerable—

in

in order to lull to reſt this inquiſitive reaſon which moves to and fro in my brain like a ſharp ſickle, and with every new ſtroke cuts off a new branch of my happineſs?"

"Beſt of princes."

He got up, and walked backwards and forwards in the room with unuſual agitation, and ſoon after left it.

Pardon, dear O... this tedious letter. You wiſh to know every trifle which concerns the Prince, and I may juſtly rank his moral philoſophy among them. I know that the ſtate of his mind is important to you, and his actions, I am aware, are on that account alſo important to you. I have for that reaſon faithfully tranſcribed all that I recollected of this converſation. I ſhall at a future period inform

form you of a new occurrence, which you could hardly have been led to expect from a dialogue like that of to-day. Farewell.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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